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NEA Today

WASHINGTON, D.C. NOVEMBER 1985

A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION VOL. 4, NO. 3

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Mary Alice Dwyer

Guess Who's Decided To TEACH!

Fred Viehaus

William R. Sallaz

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Invaluable Values

The values we teach in our classrooms sustain and invigorate our democracy. They are old values—time-tested, reliable, durable. They are values that prepare this nation's young people for the challenges of public-spirited citizenship.

I've always worked hard to instill these values in my students. And I've strived to exemplify these values myself—to teach by example as much as by exhortation.

Today, reflecting on this experience, on my two decades in the classroom, I'm perplexed. I'm perplexed by the charges that public school classrooms have become ethical vacuums, that we are retreating from teaching traditional values.

I know those claims are false. And you do, too. Our public schools have never been ethically neutral. And they are not so today.

We continue to imbue students with the moral and cultural values that unify the union, that allow us to say—despite our diversity—that we are Americans all. We know that as teachers, we have no higher calling than to prepare American children to exercise their democratic rights and accept the responsibilities those rights entail. We're well aware that the survival of our democracy demands, as our official NEA resolutions point out, a concerted effort to teach the values that undergird this nation's social, economic, and political structure.

Public education is the one institution in our nation that issues a warm and wide open invitation to all—to immigrants from every nation on earth, to members of every religious sect, to people of every color and shade, to people of every economic status. That invitation is in itself an ethical lesson—a lesson in fairness, a lesson on the meaning of democracy.

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

But what about after the students cross the welcome mat? Our ethics lesson continues. We struggle to inculcate civilizing values: respect for the dignity of all human beings, tolerance of differences, appreciation of diversity, honesty, diligence, self-control, reverence for traditional ideals.

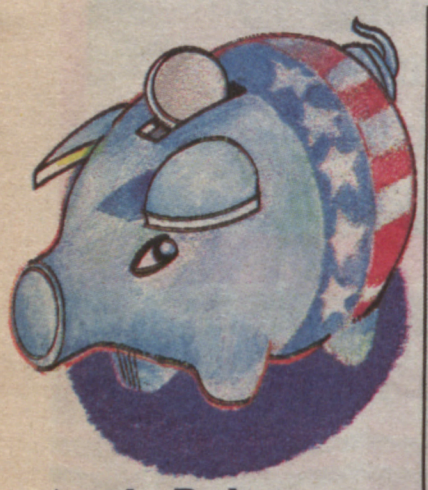
We teach, by our every action, the value of learning—and thereby the value of informed opinion within a democracy. We teach the value of an honest grade—and thereby the interdependence of the moral and intellectual worlds within us. We teach, by the respect we show for colleagues and students, the value of charity toward all and malice toward none. We teach—precisely by being who and what we are, by our diligent preparation and our ceaseless striving for improvement—the value of hard work and self-respect.

Those who charge that our classrooms are part of a vast ethical wasteland seem beguiled by an excessively narrow definition of teaching. They are oblivious to the obvious: that when we refuse to tolerate cheating, we are teaching the value of honesty; that when we make the simple demand that students put a protective covering on textbooks, we are teaching respect for property and consideration for others.

Not all our ethical lessons are conveyed indirectly. Far from it. When we teach students the glories of our national heritage—and I know of no classroom in which that does not occur—we are letting our students know they have ample reason for civic pride. And when we teach the sadder moments of our nation's history, we are helping our students understand that they have a responsibility to keep us true to the best of our heritage.

Our classrooms are not ethically barren. They are ethically fertile. Our "routine" work in the classroom is both an invitation and an introduction to responsible, active, and vigilant citizenship. And that is as it should be. That is right.

TRENDS



Are the Budget Slashers Listening?

Who benefits the most from government-funded programs for the ill, the undernourished, the socially disadvantaged? Answer: the taxpayer.

A recent report by the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families reveals that—

► Every federal dollar spent on the Childhood Immunization Program saves the government $10 in medical costs.

► Every dollar that goes to support the Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children, saves $3 in hospital costs.

► Every dollar targeted to preschool programs, such as Head Start, saves taxpayers roughly $5 by reducing the need for special education and welfare.

Disciplinary Prose and Cons

"I will never again put bubble gum in Susan's ponytail."

Remember keeping the class prankster after school to write that sentence (or a variation on it) 100 times? 1,000 times? Still tempted by this disciplinary strategy? If so, don't be embarrassed, but do pause for a moment: might not this punishment explain, at least partly, why the prankster later found it difficult to think of writing as a wonderful activity?

That thought has occurred to John C. Maxwell, executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English. And he's issuing a plea to all teachers to stop using writing exercises as punitive measures. The result of prose as punishment, fears Maxwell, is to undo the hours of work by teachers "who struggle to persuade young people that writing is an enjoyable human experience."

Business Babel

What do the phrases "down the tubes," "bottom line," "rule of thumb," and "shotgun approach" have in common? Yes, they're all part of our colorful, complex, colloquial American English. But they may also help to explain the U.S. trade deficit.

According to a recent study released by the Parker Pen Co., the U.S. business community's reliance on slanguage generates miscommunication and has doomed more than one international trade deal. One executive interviewed for the study recalled

a meeting in which an American business representative told a Chinese delegation it was time to "talk turkey." The Chinese scrambled for their English dictionaries, anxious to discover what an American bird had to do with international exchange.

Business executives, notes the study, too often forget that for their foreign business colleagues, colloquial English is a whole new ballgame.

Paradise Lost

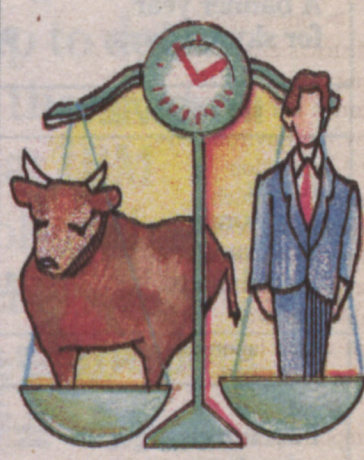
If mid-20th century America "created" the teenager, the America of the 1980s is threatening that creation with extinction. The "extended childhood" no longer extends into adolescence, concludes a new report by the Doyle Dane Bernbach advertising agency's research department.

The study—based on information gathered from teenagers across the nation—found supposedly carefree teens intensely preoccupied with major survival issues. Their rites of passage, the report states, "take a back seat to the dread possibilities of loss of parent (or his or her job), crime and violence, major illness, accidents, etc."

The report suggests that the breakdown of traditional sources of support—most notably, the family—is forcing this new generation of teenagers to deal with adult-like challenges and pressures at an earlier age.

Wonder If They Were Sold by the Pound

Criticizing schools and teachers is hardly a new American phenomenon, notes Edwin Xavier



Travers, a classroom veteran of 38 years who now teaches English at Sherwood High School in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Travers, writing in the *Washington Post*, supports his position by quoting an advertisement that appeared in an early colonial periodical. The ad announced that a ship had just arrived in Baltimore and that among its products for sale were "various commodities, among which are beef, pork, potatoes and school masters."

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ASBESTOS

KILLER STILL STALKS NATION'S SCHOOLS

NEA probes scope of problem, fights for congressional action

Preliminary findings from a nationwide NEA school asbestos survey indicate that too many districts are using inadequate—and even unsafe—methods to rid their schools of crumbling asbestos, a proven health hazard.

The new NEA data also underscore the need for a greater federal role in helping America's schools and colleges foot the tremendous cost of eliminating asbestos risks.

Questionnaires were sent to NEA's 12,000 local affiliates in August and early September, with the goal of determining just how many school districts have asbestos problems and what's being done to correct them. By early fall, more than 350 surveys had been returned to NEA's asbestos clearinghouse and analyzed. (Further updates on the results of NEA's asbestos survey will appear in future issues of *NEA Today*.)

"We cannot as yet project how many schools may still have asbestos problems, but we can identify some trends from these early returns," says NEA Research analyst Joe Falzon. Among the findings:

► Districts are relying too much on school maintenance and custodial workers to inspect for, and in some cases remove, dangerous asbestos. These extremely hazardous tasks should be performed by trained workers with specially designed equipment.

► Some school districts are contracting testing to laboratories not approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, which means the results may be suspect. It appears that many districts aren't aware of which laboratories are qualified to test.

► Most of the reporting districts are removing hazardous asbestos from student areas, rather than covering it with special paint (encapsulation) or building an enclosure around it.

► Classrooms are the least contaminated areas, while gyms, auditoriums, music rooms, and behind-the-scenes areas where maintenance and custodial personnel work (heating and cooling plants, for example) are the most contaminated.

► Recent estimates that roughly a third of the nation's 87,000 school buildings have asbestos dangers appear to be accurate. Of the 4,900 buildings represented in the NEA surveys that have been returned, 1,520 are cited by school district personnel as having some kind of asbestos problem.

► The average cost per district for asbestos cleanup is nearly $100,000; the highest cleanup cost reported so far is the $2.5 million spent by Virginia's Washington County school district. A recent Government Accounting Office survey of 36 urban districts found they've spent a total of $51 million on asbestos cleanup.

► A high percentage of the school districts reporting asbestos hazards have tapped capital improvement funds for the cost of eliminating them. Fewer than 5 percent raised the necessary funds through special tax levies.

These early survey returns appear to signal that school districts are taking the asbestos problem seriously—more seriously than they did two years ago. At that time, EPA reported that only 11 percent of all school districts had fully complied with its requirement that they inspect all schools for asbestos and report the results to the community, school staff, and students by June 28, 1983.

The lack of response to the EPA regulation and the sporadic, inconclusive nature of various EPA surveys prompted NEA to conduct its own nationwide study.

NEA and its state affiliates are also pressing ahead on the legislative front.

"Time is of the essence," says Ruby King-Williams, NEA's assistant executive director for public affairs. "Every day the asbestos problem remains can increase students' and school employees' risk of developing cancer."

This past summer, as a result of the NEA-backed Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Act passed in 1984, the EPA handed out some $45 million in grants to local school districts to help fund some 341 cleanup projects—the first time any federal money has been committed to asbestos cleanup.

Though helpful, the money didn't go very far—school districts had requested more than $500 million for some 8,300 projects. The total tab for eliminating asbestos hazards from the nation's schools is conservatively estimated at more than $3 billion.

So NEA is back on Capitol Hill this fall, asking Congress for $100 million in federal aid for projects that could begin next summer. NEA lobbyists expect Congress to come up with half that amount—and are working with EPA officials on simplifying the application for federal asbestos aid.

NEA and state affiliate leaders have also testified in favor of congressional action to compel EPA to use its existing authority to force districts to act on the asbestos problem, and to issue guidelines to make sure their asbestos work is carried out by technicans trained in abatement procedures.

EPA has partially responded by requiring school districts that receive federal grants for asbestos abatement to follow quality-control standards. But that still leaves thousands of districts on their own. As a result, some districts have not yet moved to correct their asbestos problems, some have wasted money on projects that will have to be done over a few years from now, while others have chosen abatement methods that may actually increase the risk of exposure to asbestos fibers.

"This is a national problem requiring a national solution," says NEA Vice-President Keith Geiger. "Americans shouldn't have to worry about whether or not they're inhaling cancer-causing asbestos fibers every time they step into a school building. Until the federal government gets out front on this issue, no student, school employee, or parent can breathe easy."

—Bill Fischer

News Beat

● Scores on the **Scholastic Aptitude Test** (SAT) were up again in 1985, registering the biggest single annual jump since 1963. The most dramatic gains came among minority students.

● Also up: scores in the **National Assessment of Educational Progress**. New findings show that 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students were reading better in 1984 than in 1971. The NAEP report underscores the importance of education at the early grade levels. Students who read comparatively better at age 9 seem to maintain that advantage at age 13 and 17.

● The nation's publishers have until February to come up with junior high **science textbooks** that will pass muster in California. The California board of education stunned the publishing world in September by unanimously rejecting every textbook submitted for use in the state's junior high science classrooms. The texts, board members charged, "watered down" the subjects of evolution and human reproduction. The California decision could help stiffen publishers' resolve to resist censorship. California represents 11 percent of the U.S. textbook market.

● The nation's **governors** will be conducting a series of education hearings around the country this fall. New Jersey Gov. Thomas Kean, who chairs the Education Commission of the States, has formed a "teacher renaissance working party" to bring teachers into the reform process as partners, while Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, the National Governors Association chair, has appointed 14 governors to head seven task forces that will gather information from educators, parents, and community leaders. Two NEA members—Terry Dozier, National Teacher of the Year from South Carolina, and Sue Hovey, NEA Board of Directors member from Idaho—are serving on Kean's study panel, and NEA's Government Relations office in Washington, D.C., will be helping other Association members participate.

WELL PUT!

Joe Di Dio

NEA Executive Committee Member Pearl Mack of Illinois

"Parents and education employees must all become courageous. We need to work together to stop the use—stop the abuse—of drugs and alcohol. The fact of the matter is we won't have children in our classrooms if we lose them on the streets."

SWITCHING INTO TEACHING. . .

Why would a promising assistant state attorney general suddenly decide to teach 10th grade history? Read on.

WHO SAYS THE GRAS

Perhaps it's happened to you. You're introduced to someone at a party and tell him you're a teacher. The stranger gets this faraway look in his eye and says, "Y'know, I always wanted to be a teacher." Soon he's rhapsodizing about how teaching is the most important job in the world—and besides, it's fun, because you get to work with kids. As you choke quietly on your wine spritzer, he elaborates. "Overrated" fields like law, computer science, accounting, and business are "boring," he tells you—but worse than that, they're "phony."

It's easy to get jaded after years in the classroom, to forget what made you want to teach in the first place, and to imagine that life would be ever so much better in another career. Indeed, lots of teachers are leaving the profession for higher-paying fields. But there's a tiny countercurrent, too, as successful people in other fields take stock, decide that teaching would be a more rewarding outlet for their talents—and take the plunge to turn a cocktail-party daydream into reality.

Four of these teachers-come-lately are featured here. They report many different reasons for their career switches, but underlying most of them is the sheer allure of working with ideas and young people.

As these Association members tell their stories, it's clear they've found not only a new career but a new way of life that works.

Fred Mirlani

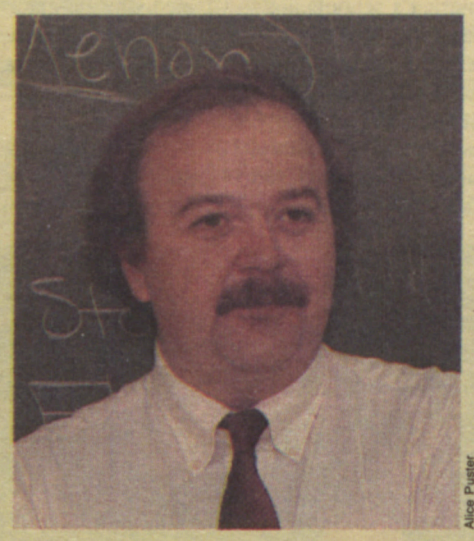
Massachusetts biology teacher Laila Goodman smiles fondly about those days on the 17-foot mullet fishing boat on Florida's Apalachicola Bay. She would intermittently bake in the sun and dive deep beneath the surface to retrieve assorted crustaceans for future lab work.

To Goodman, who worked as a field director on a four-year ecological study, excavating in the Gulf of Mexico was the high point; lab work was tedious. Wanting to work with animals, she then became a veterinary technician in Brookline, Mass., for four years. She was a good one—but remained vaguely dissatisfied.

Finally, in 1983, remembering how much she'd enjoyed teaching an undergraduate biology lab in college, she resolved to make a career in education. Now she's in her first year of teaching biology at Rockport High School.

I love biology, but I enjoy working with people. Teaching seemed the only way to combine the two. Between my student teaching and my first weeks of class, I realized what I love about this field is that it allows me to be a generalist. And I feel I have a much better grasp of my field, because I consider reading all the biology journals to be part of my job. When I worked 40 hours a week, I never could get psyched up to do that.

Goodman's days on the Apalachicola Bay provide grist for instruction for the high school students who take her classes.



Alice Puster

Police work was burning Dennis Stovall out. His growing awareness that wealthy lawbreakers were "beating the system by hiring expensive lawyers" nagged at his social conscience.

"When I reached the point where I couldn't tell the criminals from my superiors, I knew I had to get out," he recalls.

That was seven years ago, but the memory remains fresh. A police officer in Fairbanks, Alaska, Stovall had a master's degree in law enforcement, so law school seemed the next logical step. But Stovall chose instead to follow in the footsteps of his forebears and get a teaching certificate. He planned to teach for three years before going on to law school.

I've been teaching English now for six

When Montana's Bob Adams switched from being an attorney to teaching history, he judged a classroom full of even the rowdiest students "a piece of cake" in comparison with his former clients.

He arrived at teaching circuitously. On a 1976 leave of absence from his job as an assistant Montana attorney general, Adams became a Glacier National Park ranger and got hooked on the tranquil outdoors. He began rethinking his commitment to his 12-month-a-year legal profession. What he needed, he decided, was a career that would give him satisfaction—but also the freedom to pursue rangering as a summer job.

In 1983, he began working part-time and going to school at Carroll College in Helena, earning enough credits for certification to begin to teach last year at Helena's Capital High.

You don't find the same stresses in teaching that you find in law. There's nothing worse than, say, a divorce case where you've got angry people expecting you to wave a magic wand and solve their problems. In teaching, I can apply my background in government and private practice to help kids see how politics works and how you accomplish things in society. They want to know what it's really like in lobbying or legal work.

Adams notices that the students who

William R. Sallaz

can't understand why he left lawyering are the ones most obsessed with money. He tries to point out that money isn't the most important thing in life—a notion he ties into study of the Third World.

My family and I've made a commitment to be environmentally conscious and live more simply. We have the same home as always, and our Volvo has 170,000 miles on it. I shopped for nine months to find a good used Chevrolet Suburban, instead of buying one brand new. But unavoidable expenses pinch us financially, like soccer and music lessons and saving for college. What gets me is that I made almost as much money working half-time as a lawyer as I make now full-time as a teacher.

Mary Alice Dwyer

John Demeo used to sit and stew at his drafting table at Pratt and Whitney, a top aircraft engine manufacturing firm. He had "done right" by his parents and teachers and gone into engineering, where he could earn a comfortable living for the family he wanted to start. But after two years on the job in East Hartford, Conn., he was miserable.

Because Demeo liked to work with people, particularly kids, teaching had been his first career choice. But during those heady post-Sputnik days, his parents and teachers urged him to "broaden his goal."

After too many days at Pratt and Whitney, "poring over endless computer printouts," Demeo began taking evening courses at Central Connecticut State College to become certified to teach. In 1972, after four years at his engineering job, he quit to accept his first position as a math teacher at Coginchaug Regional High School in Durham, Conn.

"I often look at that as one of the bravest times for my wife and me. I took a $7,500 pay cut to go into teaching. We had a new baby on the way, and we were preparing to put a down payment on a home. It all hit at once.... We saw my $8,500 teaching salary and said, 'There's no way we can make this work.' So I took a part-time job at a local clothing store and did lots of tutoring on the side. Somehow we made it. But it was a big shock.

Demeo now chairs his high school's computer science department. He won the 1984 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching. He claims he's had no trouble making the transition from working on high-level probability problems in engineering to teaching high school students how to solve algebra problems.

He looks at some of his former colleagues at Pratt and Whitney who are making at least three times what he's earning and says, "Maybe I should have stuck it out longer. But then I think, 'Would that $60,000 salary make me happy?' I'm happy now."

I think over the years, teaching has brought a lot into our lives. Our lives are fuller. We would just be another Yuppie

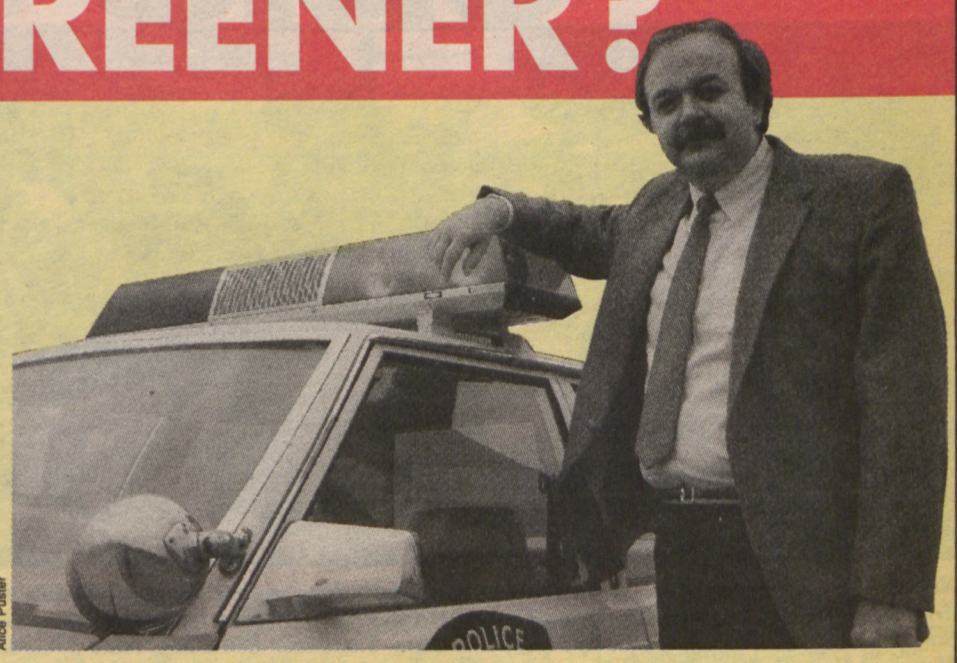
. . . AT MID-CAREER

S IS ALWAYS GREENER?

years, and I just love it. I apply what I learned in police work—that if you treat people right and show you care about them, you'll achieve discipline and get respect. The two fields have a certain amount in common: they're exciting, and you never know what's going to happen next. But unlike in police work, here I really feel as if I have a chance to improve the world around me. I can affect a child's life for the better. It's as if the teacher can flip a switch and turn those children on to a world of learning. I wouldn't even consider going to law school now.

Stovall's English classes at Clark Junior High in Anchorage love to hear the stories of his days on the Fairbanks police force. He tells about how he saw lives wrecked by drugs and the way police officers would have to break up fights in families where alcohol was abused. Particularly among students whose lives have been touched by such tough problems, his stories seem to build bridges of understanding.

I get tremendous satisfaction from my job, but I miss my salary from police work. My wife still has to work in order for us to have just our small house. I know it may seem incredible, but our big goal financially is to be able to afford a house with two bathrooms. Yet no matter how underpaid I feel, at least I can live with myself in this kind of work. I couldn't say that about other careers.



Alice Puster

Fred Mirlani

She tells them of the work she did identifying crustaceans by species and relates that work to the larger ecosystem they've been studying. The transplanted Floridian is applying the methodology she learned last year at Harvard University in an intensive nine-month mid-career program that trains science and math experts to teach secondary students.

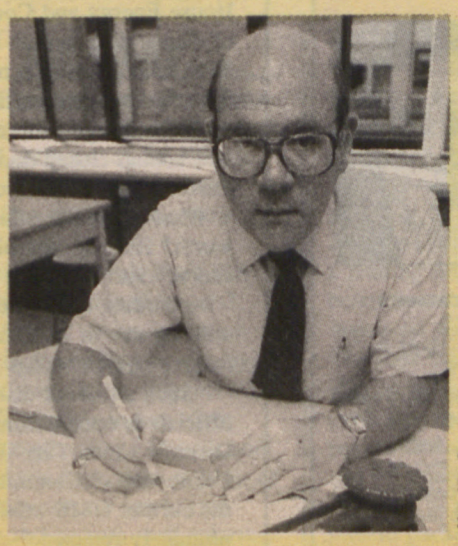
I've always known that my commitment and satisfaction are the overriding factors in the career I choose. Sure, there are other careers I could have chosen that would have paid better, but I've never done anything just for the money. How happy I am is much more important. You know, this is the first time in my life I've felt totally satisfied with my job.

William R. Sallaz

couple if I had stayed in engineering, worrying about the next car to buy or whether our house was good enough.

Don't get me wrong—those of us in education are notoriously underpaid. Sufficiently underpaid to make it hard sometimes to justify your career choice. My wife is a secretary at Strong Middle School. She chose her job because she loves working with kids. We have real close friends at our jobs—and that helps. We go to all the concerts and dances, and some of my fondest memories come from the schools. Our lives revolve around them. We lead a fuller life because of my teaching job.

I've never once regretted my decision to leave engineering.


Mary Alice Dwyer

Demeo, Stovall, Goodman, and Adams speak for hundreds of teachers nationwide—mid-career converts who have traveled occupational roads that led them to appreciate their current challenges at the chalkboard. They recognize that teaching conditions aren't ideal—but neither were those in their former professions.

And to their credit, these four teachers have taken pains to learn their profession by pursuing an accredited teacher education program. (*See boxed story above.*)

As Demeo, Stovall, Goodman, and Adams have discovered, teaching is an intrinsically challenging profession. If only we could clear away the low salary and low status that make it unattractive, we would quickly relieve the teacher shortage. But the number of talented people willing and able to make the financial sacrifice to teach—whether initially or after growing bored with other careers—will remain small. So until teaching is rewarded with higher pay and higher status, there'll continue to be a shortage of Americans choosing this profession.

Yet no matter how small their numbers, the diversity and professionalism mid-career converts bring to their classrooms enable them to engender respect in their students—and often to spark in their new colleagues a renewed sense of appreciation for what it means to be a teacher. The experience, enthusiasm, and wisdom of those who choose teaching later in life enrich the profession immeasurably.

—Vicky Lytle

Teacher Shortage: No Shortcuts

School systems that were able to choose from a surplus of qualified applicants just a few years ago found teachers in short supply this fall. Spot shortages are occurring particularly in those districts with climbing enrollments—and may spread in the decade to come, the experts warn.

Three forces are combining to spell teacher shortage:

► Elementary enrollments are on the increase, reflecting the upturn in births since the late 1970s.

► The percentage of college students preparing for teaching careers has dropped—sharply. The number of bachelor's degree recipients will decrease over the next decade.

► The median age of today's teachers is 42. Up to 40 percent of the current teaching force is expected to retire by 1995.

Between now and about 1992, an estimated 1 million public schoolteachers will be needed to fill new positions and replace retiring staff.

"These projections, combined with what we know about how people have reacted to past teacher shortages, warn us that the teaching profession is in for a shake-up," says Gary Watts, NEA's assistant executive director for professional and organizational development.

The teacher shortages of the 1950s led schools to increase class sizes—and states to lower the standards for entering the profession. Today school officials are once again hiring uncertified teachers and creating emergency certification schemes.

"Alternate" routes to certification are being tried in Los Angeles, Virginia, Texas, and elsewhere. Thirty-five states either have passed or are considering teacher certification laws that compromise former standards.

These shortcut 'remedies' for the teacher shortage amount to an indictment of the professionalism of teachers—"an implicit assertion that the skills required in the classroom can be picked up on the side," NEA Executive Director Don Cameron charges. "Teaching demands a complex set of skills and knowledge that begin—but by no means end—with mastery of subject matter. Entrusting America's children to the untrained, the unqualified, the unprepared, the uninspired threatens to make a mockery of the education reform movement."

—V.L.

HUMAN RIGHTS

NEA Members Say 'No!' to Apartheid

Carolyn Salisbury

NEA keeps up the pressure: At the forefront of a mile-long march through Washington, D.C., to dramatize opposition to South Africa's apartheid system are (from left) American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Secretary-Treasurer Bill Lucy, NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell, Rep. Walter Fauntroy (nonvoting delegate, D.C.), National Council of Negro Women President Dorothy Haight, and TransAfrica Executive Director Randall Robinson.

Pressure for change in South Africa is generating activities on school and university campuses across the U.S. this fall. Local school boards and postsecondary institutions alike are being asked not to do business with, or invest money in, companies that operate in the Republic of South Africa.

The new wave of activity climaxes a series of demonstrations that began last November and have continued and grown ever since. The target is the South African government's policy of *apartheid*—enforced separation and inequality of the races.

In July, 2,000 delegates to the 1985 NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C., gave vivid expression to their human rights principles by picketing the South African embassy. Since a bill calling for an end to American investments in South Africa was just going to the U.S. Senate, the 6,000 delegates who remained at the Convention Center wrote postcards to their senators.

To many of the picketers, activist protest was something new. One of these, who now finds herself with a police record, is Linda Hare-Hilburn, a first grade teacher in suburban San Diego, Calif. Here's the story of the protest—and the issues behind it—as Hare-Hilburn saw them.

"It began with a Representative Assembly debate on whether to take part in an organized protest against apartheid. We chose to act on our principles.

"We believe in equal education for all children, and we voted to stand up for our belief against a government that offers free schools for white students only. We believe in equal rights for everyone, and we voted to stand against the system that denies basic freedoms to thousands of black people in South Africa. We believe in basic human rights, and we resolved to protest against the government that constrains its people to live in areas determined by their race.

"Of those who marched, 58 were chosen as 'messengers' to ask the South African ambassador about his government's political prisoners. I was a messenger for the California delegation. When our questions were ignored, we linked arms and sang 'We Shall Overcome' in front of the embassy.

"Because of a city ordinance against demonstrating directly in front of embassies, the D.C. police warned us to stop, but we stood our ground and kept on singing. They took us, one by one, from our line. The last teacher to be arrested was still singing—'I Shall Overcome.'

"Although we were released on bail and our cases were dismissed the next day, this was a real arrest: I now have a police record. But it's a small price to pay for standing up for what our signs said: 'Apartheid must go—equal education for all children.'

"It was very difficult for me to disobey the law, but the time had come for me—and all of us there—to make a personal sacrifice to communicate a wider truth."

Hare-Hilburn is one of thousands of people across this country and around the world who are speaking out. As the protests continue, many more will have the chance to stand up, in different ways and in different places, for the principle of equality in South Africa.

—Jane Power

MISSING CHILDREN

The kids pictured here have disappeared from their homes. They've been reported to NEA by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a nonprofit organization funded through the U.S. Department of Justice.

If you think you've seen any of these youngsters in your school or elsewhere, please contact the Center immediately at **800/843-5678.**

Rima Danette Traxler
Born: 11-9-76.
Last seen: 5-15-85 in Longview, Wash., walking home from school.
4'3", 47 lbs., blue eyes, blond hair, ½" scar under chin, light mark across right shoulder.

Michael Mayfield
Born: 6-6-78.
Last seen: 1-10-85 in Houston, Texas, walking home from school with sister.
4', 80 lbs., black eyes, black hair.

Nancy J. Scamurra
Born: 4-27-70.
Last seen: 1-10-85 in Amherst, N.Y.
5'6", 150 lbs., blue eyes, brown hair, dimples on both cheeks, freckles across nose, ½" scar under chin, calcium build-up on bones (especially right knee)

WASHINGTON WATCH

How Much Is a Life Worth?

Item: The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last year planned to issue standards to clean up the asbestos found in the nation's school buildings. After objections from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the standards were never issued. OMB argued that the cost of cleaning up asbestos in schools is not justified by the value of the lives that would be saved.

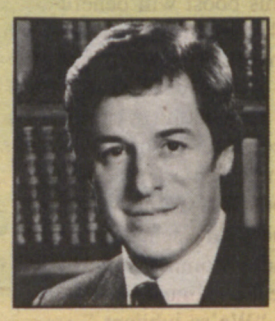
Cost/benefit analysis has arrived in Washington, D.C. Its purpose, at first glance, sounds reasonable: to ensure that government regulations are worthwhile by weighing their benefits against their costs.

But problems immediately arise whenever cost/benefit analysis is applied to proposed regulations that are designed to protect human beings from fatal or serious accidents and diseases.

The idea of weighing the costs and benefits of government regulations didn't originate with the Reagan Administration. The Ford Administration's "inflation impact statements" and Carter Administration's "regulatory analyses" served much the same purpose.

But there is a difference between the Reagan Administration approach and the approach taken by the Ford and Carter Administrations. President Reagan, in his 1981 Executive Order 12291, required all federal agencies to submit proposed regulations to OMB—and gave OMB the power to block regulations it decides are not worthwhile in cost/benefit terms—even when the "benefits" involved are human lives. The Ford and Carter Administrations never took that step.

How has the Reagan Administration's Office of Management and Budget used its newfound power? The controversy over school asbestos hazards offers an answer. Last year, as EPA developed regulations to help clean asbestos out of the nation's schools, OMB calculated that each cancer death avoided by the regulation should be valued at $1 million. But, the budget office went on to add, since schoolchildren exposed to asbestos could be expected to live 30 or 40 years before dying of asbestos-related cancer, the "current value" of each child's life must be "discounted" down from $1 million.



Rep. James Florio (D-N.J.)

OMB analysts suggested "discounting" the million-dollar total by 10 percent for every year a child might be expected to live cancer-free after exposure to asbestos. Such discounting brought the value of a child's life down to a mere $22,000—far less than the $96,000 to $208,000 per exposed child that EPA estimated it would cost to clean up asbestos enough to preclude cancer death. Under OMB's calculations, the "benefit" of cleaning up asbestos—saving childrens lives—clearly wasn't worth the cost. EPA's asbestos clean-up regulations were shelved.

Fifteen million children and 1.5 million education workers are currently estimated to be exposed to dangerous asbestos in the schools (*see page 3*).

"I don't think the American people know that officials of this Administration calculate the dollar cost of saving a 9-year-old child's life—and then decide it is not worth taking action to protect children at that price," says Rep. James J. Florio (D-N.J.).

Florio is a member of the investigations subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The OMB method of discounting human lives and its objections to the proposed EPA school asbestos regulations were disclosed at hearings of the subcommittee earlier this year.

The hearings were necessary because the budget office operates behind closed doors. OMB's meetings with EPA are not a matter of public record.

What is the life of a school child or educational worker worth? How do you place a value on the pain and suffering of cancer victims?

According to the Reagan Administration, you can come up with figures in cold, hard cash—and then decide *in advance* not to save human beings from preventable death and disease.

"Such a callous disregard for human life by our government officials is unconscionable," NEA Government Relations Director Linda Tarr-Whelan told the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in recent testimony. She urged that the current OMB mind-set be "fundamentally questioned and ultimately rejected."

State Side

NORTHEAST

New Jersey has passed a law setting the highest statewide starting teacher salary in the nation—$18,500.

Under New Jersey Education Association lobbying pressure since 1983, Gov. Thomas Kean finally ditched previous efforts to establish merit pay provisions in the bill, thereby ensuring passage of the landmark minimum salary legislation this September.

In lieu of merit pay, Kean and the more than 119,000-member NJEA compromised on language providing an annual state grant of $1,000 to one teacher in each of the state's 2,240 public schools. The grants are to be used for education-related purchases of the teacher's choice.

Salary minimums around the state now average $14,900, with the lowest at $12,000. The new law authorizes use of state funds to bring every district's starting salary up to the $18,500 standard. This boost will benefit some 14,000 current teachers and untold numbers of future ones.

At the local level, the new law is stimulating Association requests to reopen negotiations on current contracts, as teachers look forward to winning across-the-salary-schedule improvements commensurate with the new minimum.

"We're jubilant," says NJEA President Dennis Giordano. "For the first time we have an attractive starting salary that may ultimately boost all salaries."

OVERSEAS

It took two years of negotiations and arbitration, but 8,000 teachers at the Department of Defense Dependents Schools finally have a new contract.

As federal employees, overseas teachers can bargain working conditions but not salaries. Among the improvements NEA's Overseas Education Association (OEA) won in the new agreement: a longer time limit for filing grievances, pay for mandated extra-duty assignments, and employees' guaranteed access to their personnel files.

The Department of Defense has filed several "exceptions" to language in the arbitrated settlement, so key contract provisions including certification and evaluation will remain unimplemented until the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) rules on their legality.

If the FLRA rules in DoD's favor, the sections in question will be removed from the contract. If it rules in OEA's favor and directs DoD to implement these sections, OEA contends that its members will be entitled to monetary damages.

GAINS, LOSSES: STATE BY STATE

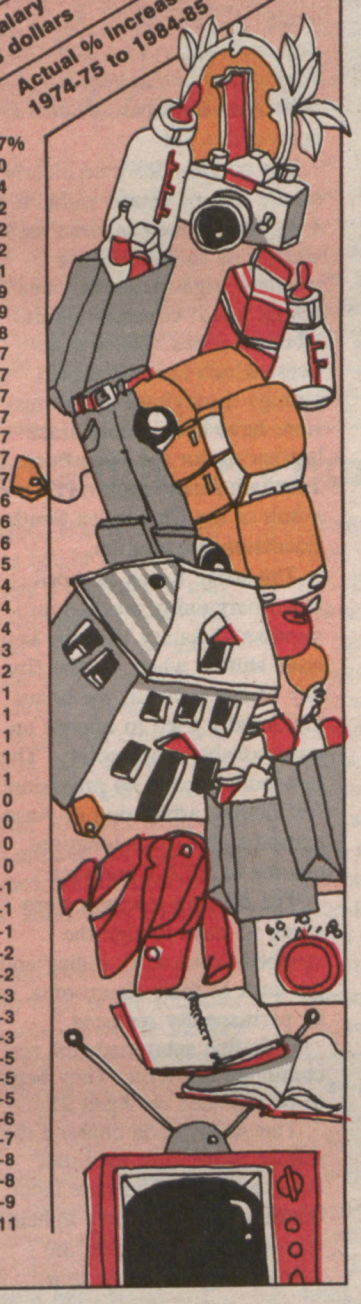
The Case of the Phantom Pay Hike

Teacher salaries have more than doubled in the past 10 years. Right? Yes—and no. As the table below shows, the average teacher salary nationwide in 1974-75 was $11,641. Last school year the average was $23,582. But taking 1984-85 salaries and expressing them in "constant" 1974-75 dollars (to eliminate the impact of inflation) shows that most teachers enjoyed no real gain in purchasing power.

While teachers in Wyoming and Alaska saw their real salaries climb by more than 20 percent over the 10-year period, for teachers in many other states the decade brought a net *loss* or at best a wash in salary.

	Average teacher salary		Apparent % increase, 1974-75 to 1984-85	1984-85 salary in 1974-75 dollars	Actual % increase, 1974-75 to 1984-85
	1974-75	1984-85			
1. Wyoming	$10,317	$26,398	156%	$13,042	27%
2. Alaska	16,381	39,751	143	19,526	20
3. Texas	9,788	22,600	131	11,166	14
4. Kansas	9,332	21,121	126	10,435	12
5. Kentucky	8,941	20,225	126	9,993	12
6. Oregon	10,809	24,378	126	12,044	12
7. Colorado	10,929	24,454	124	12,082	11
8. Rhode Island	12,371	27,384	121	13,530	9
9. New Mexico	10,005	22,064	121	10,901	9
10. North Dakota	9,239	20,090	117	9,926	8
11. Alabama	9,304	20,209	117	9,985	7
12. Montana	9,994	21,705	117	10,724	7
13. Ohio	10,730	23,300	117	11,512	7
14. Idaho	9,242	20,033	117	9,898	7
15. Arizona	10,807	23,380	116	11,551	7
16. Arkansas	8,651	18,696	116	9,237	7
17. Minnesota	11,790	25,450	116	12,574	7
18. Wisconsin	11,433	24,577	115	12,143	6
19. West Virginia	9,106	19,563	115	9,666	6
20. Nebraska	9,264	19,848	114	9,806	6
21. Oklahoma	8,942	19,020	113	9,397	5
22. South Carolina	9,465	19,971	111	9,867	4
23. Utah	10,052	21,170	111	10,460	4
24. Pennsylvania	11,618	24,435	110	12,073	4
25. Connecticut	11,805	24,468	107	12,089	3
26. Washington	12,415	25,610	106	12,653	2
27. Michigan	13,862	28,401	105	14,032	1
28. Maryland	12,626	25,861	105	12,777	1
29. Missouri	9,990	20,452	105	10,105	1
30. Indiana	11,186	22,853	104	11,291	1
31. Georgia	10,135	20,610	103	10,183	1
UNITED STATES	11,641	23,582	103	11,651	0
32. Florida	10,287	20,836	103	10,294	0
33. Tennessee	9,916	20,080	103	9,921	0
34. Virginia	10,671	21,536	102	10,640	0
35. New Jersey	12,594	25,125	100	12,414	-1
36. Dist. of Col.	14,355	28,621	99	14,122	-1
37. South Dakota	8,708	17,356	99	8,575	-1
38. Mississippi	8,033	15,971	99	7,891	-2
39. Louisiana	9,800	19,470	99	9,620	-2
40. Iowa	10,655	20,934	96	10,343	-3
41. Vermont	9,679	18,996	96	9,385	-3
42. Illinois	13,165	25,829	96	12,761	-3
43. New York	14,700	28,213	92	13,939	-5
44. California	14,315	27,410	91	13,542	-5
45. Delaware	12,009	22,990	91	11,359	-5
46. Massachusetts	12,734	24,110	89	11,912	-6
47. North Carolina	10,990	20,691	88	10,223	-7
48. Maine	9,806	18,329	87	9,056	-8
49. New Hampshire	9,998	18,577	86	9,178	-8
50. Nevada	12,227	22,520	84	11,126	-9
51. Hawaii	13,684	24,628	80	12,168	-11

Source: NEA Research



MIDWEST

Collective bargaining has gone much more smoothly this year for 485 affiliates of the Illinois Education Association, thanks to a new IEA-backed education reform law.

By press time only four IEA locals had called strikes—and three of those strikes had been settled in fewer than seven days.

What's made the difference is the $377 million in new state funds for education. Most school districts are applying a portion of the money toward improving teacher and service staff salaries.

"We applaud those districts that are using the money as the legislature intended," says IEA President Reg Weaver. "They're addressing a long-standing problem."

Other pluses in the reform package: full-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs, a reading improvement program, better in-service training, and improved policies on discipline. The state board of education will also be preparing a "report card" for use in assessing the performance level of each school and its students.

Asked to grade the Illinois reform package, Weaver says, "How about an A-? It's not perfect, but it's close, and it puts a top state priority on public education."

MID-ATLANTIC

Convinced that legislators will insist on tying merit pay to any proposed teacher career ladder plan, the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) has appointed a special strategic planning task force to deal with the issue.

"DSEA is opposed to merit pay or pay for performance, so our primary goal is to defeat any career ladder plan that incorporates these provisions," explains DSEA Vice-President Mary Anne Galloway, chair of the seven-member group. "At the same time, though, we want to persuade the state to implement teacher legislation that our members favor."

DSEA's legislative wish list for 1986 includes substantial salary raises for all teachers, creation of a state committee to set standards—with Association input—for teacher evaluation, and a state-funded full-scale development program for all school employees.

PACIFIC

Association members in the Pacific states are organizing to make their presence felt in the 1986 congressional elections—by contributing to the NEA Political Action Committee (NEA-PAC).

Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Nevada, and Hawaii are now the top five states in the nation in per-member contributions to NEA-PAC, and California and Montana rank ninth and tenth.

Last year, Oregon Education Association members made their state the first to meet—and surpass—the national NEA-PAC goal of $3 per member. They gave a total of $80,000—twice the previous year's contribution.

"We think it's vitally important to support candidates who will support public education," says OEA President Sandy Ellis. "Our local leaders and active members worked hard to make the NEA-PAC goal OEA's reality."

WEST

Since 1958, a Helpmobile sponsored by the Colorado Education Association has brought innovative teachers from all over the state to help rural colleagues whose opportunities for in-service training are almost nil.

In their four scheduled visits, this school year's Helpmobile team of 15 teachers will make presentations on topics ranging from child abuse to art to computers to poetry-writing (with local children serving as would-be poets).

On a typical foray, team members meet in Denver on a Friday morning, then head for their destination by chartered bus—with equipment and materials stashed underneath. They give their sessions on Saturday morning and are back in Denver Saturday night.

"The program is tremendous for public relations," observes planning committee chair Mary Alice Covelli, of Fort Morgan. "Our *CEA Helpmobile Handbook* spells out what team members and local arrangers should do, and that includes telling the community that we're coming."

Local Look

ALASKA

Take a school district that has 133 teachers spread out over an area the size of Ohio. Add a superintendent who makes a personal crusade out of his opinion that the district's teachers have too many rights and are overpaid.

Faced with this recipe for disaster, Alaska's Northwest Arctic Education Association (NAEA) held firm at the negotiating table for 20 months. The Association simply refused to give in to the district's myriad of take-away demands covering teachers' rights, benefits, and salaries.

The hang-tough strategy paid off in late summer when NAEA members ratified a new contract that maintains their hard-won rights and benefits, adds protection against unjust involuntary transfers, protects Alaska Native teachers in the event of layoffs—and provides for an average salary increase of 4 percent a year.

MINNESOTA

Members of the Minnesota Education Association's largest local approached the business community over the summer to enlist help in making the return to school a time of celebration rather than dread.

"The impetus for this project came from a member of our negotiating team who was upset about all the negative back-to-school publicity she saw on TV," explains Anoka-Hennepin Education Association (AHEA) President Steve Larson. Anoka-Hennepin is a suburban Twin Cities school district of 2,000 teachers and 33,000 students.

AHEA made 3′ x 5′ banners reading "Welcome back, students and teachers" for local shopkeepers to display along with their back-to-school specials. The merchants also provided booklets full of food and entertainment coupons offering students such bargains as free second rounds of miniature golf and pizza.

To further honor students in the back-to-school period, some stores put samples of students' work on display.

MARYLAND

Folks in a sprawling Washington, D.C., suburban county now know all about conditions and problems in their public schools, thanks to the local NEA affiliate.

Last spring, the Prince George's County Educators Association (PGCEA) mailed a "worklife" survey to the county's 6,250 teachers and school administrators—84 percent of whom are PGCEA members. The survey asked about such things as job stress, discipline problems, transfers, and availability of teaching materials. More than 70 percent of the educators responded. PGCEA tallied the results with technical help from NEA and the Maryland State Teachers Association.

The findings point out clearly many of the problems facing teachers. For example, 53 percent of those responding spend eight hours of their personal time on classroom work each week. Twenty percent said they were "physically abused" (touched, shoved, or hit) by students last year, and 22 percent required counseling for job-related stress. PGCEA brought these issues to public attention via a news conference that won widespread media coverage.

"We gained more from the survey than just increased public awareness of classroom conditions," explains PGCEA President Paul Pinsky. "We also identified membership priorities for the next round of bargaining, which begins this month."

NEBRASKA

Over the summer the citizens of the village of Farnam saved their high school from oblivion—by bringing in enough new students to reach the enrollment minimum of 25.

They also saved the jobs of Farnam High's 10 teachers—who make up more than half of the Farnam Education Association. FEA enrolls every one of the 17 teachers in this south central Nebraska district.

FEA President Marty Hughes served on the citizens committee that saved the school through such means as bringing in four foreign exchange students.

Hughes also saved the Greenbacks, the Farnam team he coaches in Nebraska's Six-Man Football Conference. This season, with 16 of the school's 19 male students on the team—including a Swedish exchange student who's been a quick study at kicking—the Greenbacks have more depth than Hughes ever thought possible when the projected male enrollment was 12.

Hughes hopes the enrollment slump will be over next year, but says people should move to Farnam anyway, "because it's a great place to raise kids."

FLORIDA

Lots of folks would love to get a $3,000 bonus. But Broward NEA President Phil Van Pelt doesn't like the way he was chosen to receive his so-called "merit pay"—and he and his local association have found a positive way to protest.

The Broward County local will use Van Pelt's bonus for five $500 scholarships for Association members or their children who are seeking education degrees. (The last $500 goes for taxes and fees.)

The legislature's merit pay plan, opposed by Association members as unfair and divisive, took effect in participating counties last fall. Van Pelt, a science teacher at Coral Springs High School, decided he could best criticize the plan from the inside.

He applied for the award—and was one of 3,000 winners chosen from over 40,000 applicants around the state. "I felt like I'd just won a lottery," he recalls.

In fact, Florida's Teachers of the Year for both 1984 and 1985 failed to qualify for merit pay—one of them a nominee for the Teacher in Space program.

Broward NEA was already awarding scholarships, so Van Pelt saw a natural use for his bonus. It's not only good for members' children, he says, but can also help ESP members who are working toward their teaching certificates.

NEVADA

1985 is looking like a very good year for the Classified School Employees Association of Clark County (CSEA-NEA). Since affiliating with NEA last December, CSEA has grown from 900 to 1,600 members.

And their first NEA contract has brought the 3,000-member bargaining unit unprecedented gains—including a 12.75 percent one-year wage increase.

Through joint lobbying with the Nevada State Education Association, CSEA helped win a one-time retention bonus from the state: all returning education employees received a check for 5 percent of their 1984-85 salaries in addition to their negotiated salary increases.

VICTORY IN VERMONT

As Natural As Being Right

In Hinesburg, Vt., as in the rest of the world, being right isn't always synonymous with winning. But the Association's 28 teachers—who *know* they're right—have emerged victorious from the bitterest labor dispute in Vermont-NEA's history, thanks to a favorable ruling from the Vermont Labor Relations Board just days before school opened this fall.

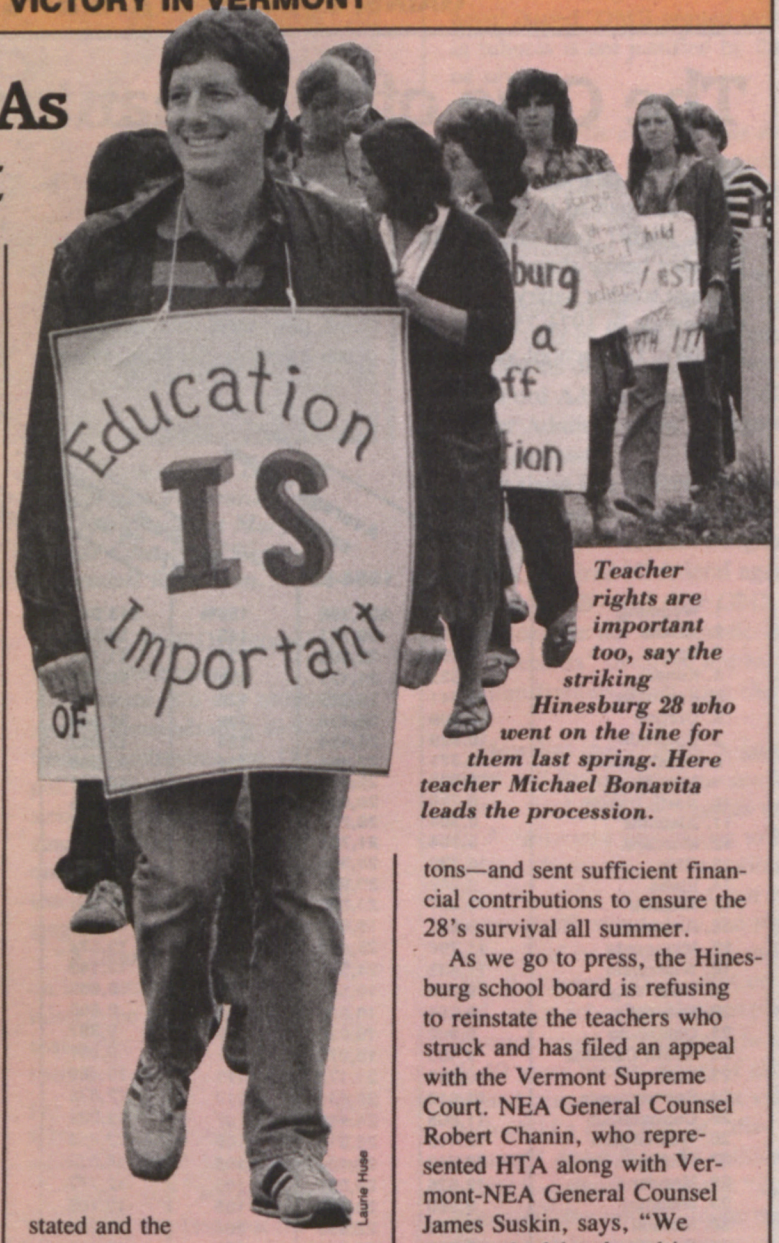
For coming down so clearly on the side of what's right, it's a win that's been savored nationwide. The ruling bolsters teachers' right to strike when a school board commits unfair labor practices. Those practices, which have prompted outrage throughout the profession, have been reality since last spring for the Hinesburg Teachers Association (HTA)—a unit of the Chittenden South Education Association.

The strike began in April when bargaining reached an impasse on salary. But the key issue shifted when, on the first day of the walkout, the board unilaterally tried to impose an unreasonable work policy. The new policy made no provision for binding arbitration or Association rights—two longtime clauses in HTA's contract.

The striking teachers were given 15 days to sign the stripped-down work policy and get back to their classrooms, or be permanently replaced.

Only one submitted; the rest continued to picket. They began to be replaced on April 22.

The Association charged the school board with an unfair labor practice. The state labor board's ruling not only upheld this charge but ordered the "Hinesburg 28" to be reinstated and the "permanent replacements" to be discharged.



Laurie Hutse

Teacher rights are important too, say the striking Hinesburg 28 who went on the line for them last spring. Here teacher Michael Bonavita leads the procession.

"It was only natural that the state board supported our position," says HTA president Myrtle Kimball, a social studies teacher. "We're right, the school board is wrong. School boards have to know they can't treat teachers as horribly as ours has treated us."

Hinesburg's teachers have won overwhelming support from their peers nationwide. Teachers from Oregon to Puerto Rico have donned "I support the Hinesburg 28" buttons—and sent sufficient financial contributions to ensure the 28's survival all summer.

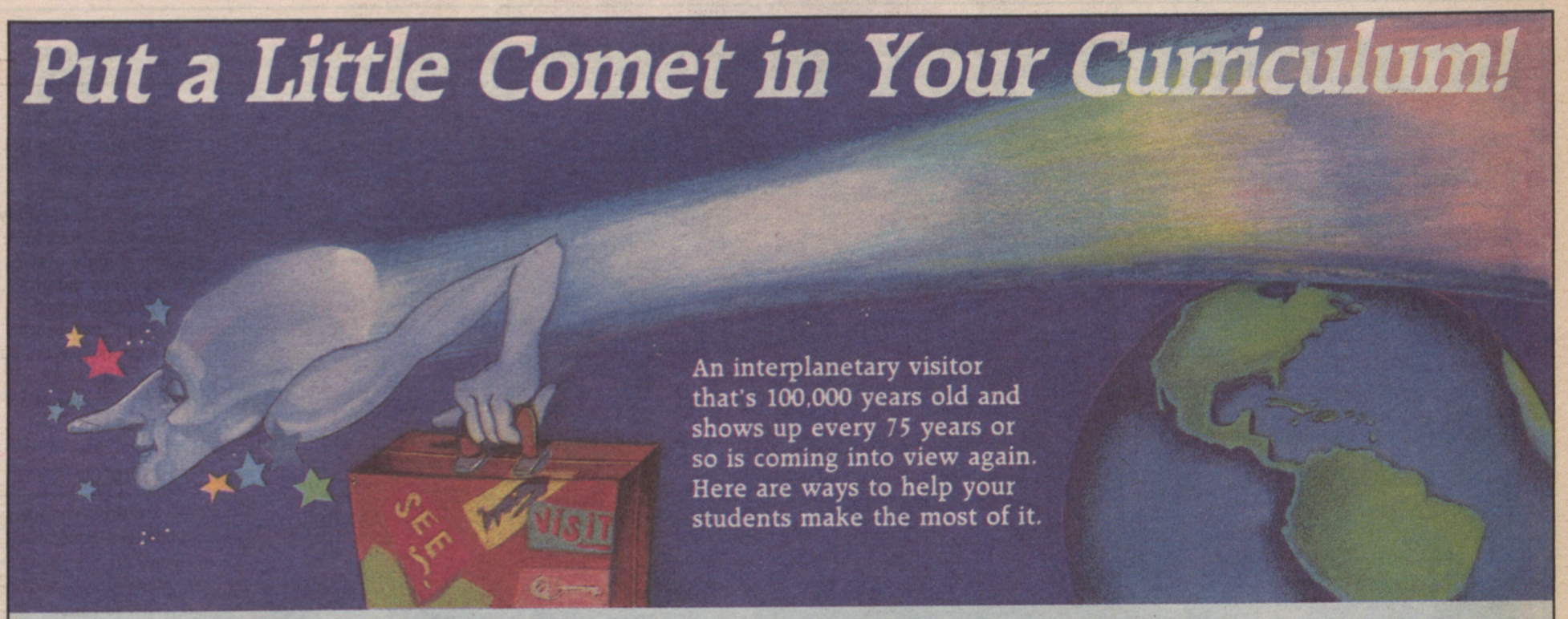
As we go to press, the Hinesburg school board is refusing to reinstate the teachers who struck and has filed an appeal with the Vermont Supreme Court. NEA General Counsel Robert Chanin, who represented HTA along with Vermont-NEA General Counsel James Suskin, says, "We believe the labor board is correct, and we expect the Vermont Supreme Court to agree."

Although the appeal may delay the reinstatement of the striking teachers, they will be entitled to back pay plus 12 percent interest if the labor board's order is sustained.

Concludes Vermont-NEA President Maida Townsend, "The Hinesburg 28 have held their heads high in the face of unreasonable challenges. They've made it clear that teachers in Vermont will not tolerate a school board's efforts to destroy teachers' rights."

IN THE CLASSROOM

Put a Little Comet in Your Curriculum!



An interplanetary visitor that's 100,000 years old and shows up every 75 years or so is coming into view again. Here are ways to help your students make the most of it.

by Arnie Weissmann

It will begin, perhaps, with the appearance of the first student who wears an "I saw Halley's Comet—1985-86" T-shirt. It will build: the image of Halley's Comet will zoom across the surface of metal lunch boxes and along the sides of tennis shoes; a second-grader will tell you she's named her cat "Edmond"; and rainbow-hued comet stickers will appear on (and be scraped off) desks.

Curiosity and excitement about Halley's Comet, whether spurred by comet-shaped marshmallows in a breakfast cereal or by a birthday-present telescope, will run high in classrooms this school year. But how can teachers capitalize on this heightened interest?

Aspiring astronauts are clearly interested in what goes on in space, so we began with Association members who were finalists in NASA's Teacher in Space program. How will they deal with Halley's Comet in the classroom?

"The discussion of the comet isn't limited to science classes," says Michael Metcalf of Greensboro, Vt., who is on a one-year leave of absence to work for NASA. "In my subject, social studies, students learn that it's only recently that comets have been viewed in scientific terms. In the past, the appearance of a comet supposedly foretold the coming of a catastrophe."

Another social studies teacher, Christa McAuliffe of Concord, N.H., is the lucky woman chosen to ride in the space shuttle this winter. McAuliffe notes that students can be asked to look to the future as well as the past when studying Halley's Comet.

"Some of the younger kids may become 'Halley two-timers' in 2061 when the comet returns," she points out, "and it would be interesting to hear what they think will be going on then."

NASA chose second grade teacher Barbara Morgan of McCall, Idaho, to be the alternate Teacher in Space. Morgan will be in training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston this year, but she'd been planning to talk about Halley's Comet with her students.

"Mark Twain was closely associated with Halley's Comet—he was born during its appearance in 1835, and correctly predicted that he would die during its reappearance in 1910," Morgan says. "I'd ask students to compare life on a riverboat in Mark Twain's time to life on a space shuttle today."

Finalist Bob Foerster, a sixth grade and science teacher in West Lafayette, Ind., is working this year at NASA's Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. Foerster has thought of several ways to use Halley's Comet to illustrate scientific principles in the classroom.

"We can study map coordinates, both on a globe and in the celestial sphere," he suggests. "The comet can be a springboard for looking at several celestial activities—for instance, the differences among circular, elliptical, parabolic, and hyperbolic orbits. Or we can examine more general concepts, such as observation and record-keeping. After all, scientists studying comets will rely on today's scientific data for the next 76 years."

In Xenia, Ohio, elementary school librarian Barbara Hooper Heckart—author of the children's book *Edmond Halley: The Man and His Comet*—reports that her school plans to invite students and parents to view the comet from the school parking lot on December 13, an hour and a half after sunset.

"We're just asking them to bring their binoculars," Heckart says. "We'll supply the hot chocolate."

Heckart has more ideas for school-community cooperation. "The students can devise a time capsule to be opened during the *next* appearance of the comet," she says. "Or the whole town can hold a 'Let There Be Dark' campaign. Normally, light pollution will prevent city dwellers from seeing the comet. If local officials and most citizens agree to turn off their lights for 15 minutes, it will really help."

► Imagine you're a journalist aboard Comet Halley on any of its previous 27 recorded orbits. Report what's happening on Planet Earth as you pass it.

► Search your town's newspaper files to find local reaction to Halley's Comet in May 1910.

► Interview local people who saw the comet in 1910.

A Quick Guide to Comet Watching

This time around, Halley's Comet will not be as bright as it was in 1910—in fact, there's a chance it may not be visible to the naked eye at all, according to Anita Cockran, an astronomer at the University of Texas in Austin. Further, says Cockran, nobody can predict how bright the comet will be on the night you want to view it.

Viewing will be best during new moons, and at least 30 miles from city lights. Allow 20 minutes for your eyes to adjust to the dark before attempting to see the comet. Binoculars will definitely help.

Beginning in mid-December, the comet will appear high in the southern sky at sunset, moving lower in the sky through January and disappearing February 9-20, when it goes behind the sun. By March 1 it will reappear in the low southeast sky before dawn. It will be closest to earth, and its tail will be longest, on April 11.

It will look the way you probably expect it to—a fuzzy head with a tail—and will be about 20 times longer than the stars around it.

Cockran assures us that there's no need to worry that the comet will burn out before our grandchildren or great-grandchildren get a chance to see it. It loses some of its substance every time it swings past the sun—but only a few centimeters of its three-kilometer-wide nucleus of frozen gases and dirt.

Third grade teacher Eleanor Franey of Arlington, Mass., has lectured around the country on her "Sky Alive" program, focusing on the sky for lessons on topics like weather, birding, and trees. This fall, before school began, Franey painted a five-foot picture of a comet and mounted it across her chalkboard, with a sign: "Hello, I've come to visit you this year. Do you know who I am?"

During the school day, says Franey, "I don't mention the comet, but I've put out several books on the subject. I'll let the students raise the questions about it and find the answers. I've briefed the librarian, so she's ready for comet questions. The students will write what they've discovered on a large piece of paper next to the picture. Eventually they'll make a presentation about the comet to a first-grade class. It's going to be an exciting year."

Other promising comet-related ideas can be found in a NASA booklet called *Comet Halley Returns: A Teachers' Guide 1985-86.* For example:

► Compose or collect poems, songs, or works of art inspired by the comet.

► Research and write biographical sketches of people who have contributed to our understanding of comets, from Aristotle to Fred Whipple.

The NASA booklet, which also contains such scientific exercises as determining the brightness of a star and figuring the length of a comet's tail, is available for $2 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Request publication EP-197.

Students' study of comets, of course, isn't limited to once every 76 years, and other comets may be visible during your teaching career. But Halley's Comet is special—and this year can be too, as students learn to understand and appreciate this particular celestial wanderer.

Arnie Weissmann, a writer living in Austin, Texas, spent four years as an editor with the Illinois Education Association and the Texas State Teachers Association.

Reading Up on Halley's Comet

Books

Brown, Peter L. *Comets, Meteorites and Men.* New York: Taplinger, 1974. $12.50.

Chapman, Robert, and Brandt, John. *The Comet Book.* Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishing Co., 1984. $14.95.

Flaste, Richard, *et al. The New York Times Guide to the Return of Halley's Comet.* New York: Times Books, 1985. $16.95.

Yeomans, Donald K. *The Comet Halley Handbook: An Observers Guide.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983. $4.75.

Magazines

Astronomy, P.O. Box 92788, Milwaukee, WI 53202; 12 issues for $21.

Sky and Telescope, Sky Publishing Corporation, 49 Bay State Rd., Cambridge, MA 02238; 12 issues for $20.

INTERNATIONAL

Dan Dakotas

These happy faces come from Luoyang Primary, paired with a school in Anthony, Kansas.

WHEN KANSAS GOES TO CHINA

Modern-day Marco Polos seek trade in the riches of the classroom

by Mahlon Coop

This past summer 21 of us members of Kansas-NEA spent four weeks in China. Our 15 home schools were paired with "sister" schools in wheat-growing Henan (Kansas's sister province). The schools we visited were in three cities on the Huang (Yellow) River—Zhengzhou, Kaifeng, and Luoyang.

Impresario of our trip was Gretchen Davis, an elementary school teacher in the Turner district. On learning about the Kansas-Henan relationship (initiated by the Chinese embassy in Washington), Gretchen decided educators should be among the first Kansans to visit Henan.

Kansas Gov. John Carlin agreed and put Gretchen directly in touch via his own telex with Henan's foreign affairs office. As the nucleus of the Kansas/China Exchange in Education, Gretchen and colleagues in Turner recruited the rest of us, and got our schools paired by Henan officials. Henan teachers will return our visit later this school year, we hope.

We raised enough money to cover 75 percent of our travel expenses. We got Association support: publicity from K-NEA, and from NEA, a 1985-86 Hilda Maehling fellowship to Gretchen for post-trip extension activities.

Now we're back, bearing examples of work Chinese students have done and otherwise incorporating what we learned into our curriculums.

But our first impressions may interest colleagues as well.

We were awed by the great size of the typical Chinese school. The elementary schools we saw averaged well over 1,000 students; high school classrooms typically contained 45 to 50 desks.

At the same time, Chinese teachers were amazed at our average class loads. Assigned usually two classes per day, they couldn't believe that American high school teachers teach five and sometimes six. They kept asking, "When do you find time to prepare for your classes?" (When indeed!)

They were also interested in how Americans are recruited into teaching and how they're hired. Since Chinese teachers are more or less drafted into service, we found it difficult to explain our free market system where entrance into the profession is voluntary, and hiring is usually done after jobs are advertised.

Gretchen's diary summarizes an illuminating conversation she had on this with a former teacher:

"...met a Chinese woman today. She had little teacher training, but had taught in a junior high school during the Cultural Revolution, and like all teachers suffered much from ridicule by students. When the Revolution ended in 1976, though only in her twenties, she was categorized as 'too old' for university admittance. She says that the hope for Chinese education lies in getting better educated people who *choose* to be teachers, rather than assigning people to the profession."

From our questions about study time, we learned how crucial national examinations are to a student's future in China. English teacher Linda Case, of Shawnee Mission West High School, noted positively in her diary:

"Regardless of grade level, the Chinese students take their school work seriously. They are fully aware that a low score on comprehensive examinations given after graduation will exclude them from university study."

Anne Franklin

Before leaving their "sister" school in China—the Experimental Senior Middle School in Zhengzhou—teachers from Shawnee Mission West High School and Kansas colleagues couldn't resist posing for a souvenir photo with their hosts.

Many of us saw this behavior, however, as evidence of a return to a national obsession for study among students, to the detriment of their social development and even their health—something some Chinese teachers privately admitted was troubling.

Still it was interesting to note that within the discipline the Chinese impose on themselves, art is seen as a form of creative self-expression and given a high place, especially in the education of young children.

Dan Dakotas, art teacher at Shawnee Mission West, made this note:

"Art plays an important role in academic development. It is a required subject in elementary schools, with an emphasis on calligraphy.

"Young children seem to develop visual perception and a good sense of design, which is evident in their portrayals of the beauty of nature."

Finally, Anne Franklin, art coordinator and teacher in Turner, made this observation of a theme that had struck all of us:

"Education seems to be in the forefront of government policy. Numerous articles on education appeared on the front page of the [English-language] *China Daily* during our relatively short stay. Teaching is a well-respected vocation (and as highly paid as most any other by Chinese standards)."

Anne also wondered, "Can we say as much for the importance of education and educators in the USA? Would American educators say, as we so often heard the Chinese say, 'We welcome your suggestions and comments for improving the educational process in our school'?"

Mahlon Coop teaches English and debate at Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park, Kansas.

Meet:

Peter Patterson

Raffi

Shaking Out the Sillies . . . Seriously

The average member of the standing-room-only audience is 3-feet, 6-inches tall, and boisterous. Then the lights dim, and within minutes the energy is channeled. Entranced, the diminutive dynamos are singing along with Raffi, a minstrel/composer perhaps best described as a cross between Mr. Rogers and Pete Seeger.

When the energy level again starts to peak, and giggles turn to squeals, Raffi shifts to musical therapy—the upbeat "Shake My Sillies Out," followed by the gently soothing lullaby "Skin and Bones." Then he again picks up the pace with "Willoughby Wallaby Woo."

*The timing is impeccable. And you begin to understand why this Canadian's success (six albums certified platinum) is spreading south of the border. A Raffi record, like a Raffi concert, is an invitation to the joy of music—*and *to the joy of time spent with an adult who trusts young people, treats them with respect, and understands that children's music, however playful, demands serious thoughtfulness.*

Recently, NEA Today *staff writer Carl Luty interviewed Raffi (born Raffi Cavoukian) after one of his concerts. He had to wait an hour, though, until all the young fans standing patiently in line had gotten what they wanted—a Raffi hug.*

You've often been described as a musical educator. Yet very little of your concert material could be called educational in any strict sense.
A lot depends on how you define "educational," and I define it very, very broadly. My songs, even the "nonsense" songs, often include elements of learning—rhyming patterns, vocabulary skills, even basic arithmetic, like in "Let's Do the Numbers Rumba." And I think of "Baby Beluga," which of course is about the beluga whale, as a kind of basic introduction to ecology. In fact its theme, that we—all of us, all living things—are in this together and need to be friends, runs through a good part of my music.

That seems especially true of "Like You and Me" [from the 1985 album *One Light, One Sun*], which struck me as a beautiful affirmation of multicultural diversity. But do kids understand that theme?
Of course they do! It's adults who have trouble with that one.

That sounds a bit romanticized.
No, I'm not trying to romanticize childhood. But I do think we underestimate children, underrate their understanding. Just because they can't articulate it doesn't mean the understanding isn't there. That's why, to go back to your first question, I think kids learn an awful lot from what's *not* in my music. There's no condescension. I try never to forget that kids have a special dignity of their own. And I think maybe that explains my popularity. I respect kids. And I think I help them learn self-respect. I hope so.

I read that your albums are required instructional tools in many preschools and kindergartens throughout Canada. That must be gratifying.
Oh, yeah! It's wonderful. I'm really proud that teachers seem to appreciate what I do. I think most of them just use my music as a springboard. They might ask the kids to make up additional lyrics or to identify the different musical instruments. That's one of the reasons, by the way, that I try to keep my arrangements straightforward and uncluttered. It's important for kids to be able to discern the instruments, their tonal color, the different moods they create.

Another thing—you've got to *really* enunciate lyrics. If you don't, kids miss the "vocabulary lesson," the rhyming patterns, the different rhythms of speech.

We mentioned preschool and kindergarten. Is that the age group you try to target?
Not really. I used to say that my audience was the three- to seven-year-old group. But now I notice more and more kids who are older—even 10- and 11-year-olds. And I think that's great—that they don't think it's "uncool" to go to a Raffi concert.

I also try hard to make sure that parents find my albums and concerts pleasant. I want parents and children to listen together, to sing together. My music is a celebration of life, and I really like the idea of parents and children enjoying that celebration with each other.

You sound as though your profession has become a cause, maybe a social reform movement.
I wouldn't go that far. But I do think the work I'm doing is important, that it's based on a new vision of children, that the empathy I express for them gives real meaning to the idea that we all have to respect each other, accept each other. It took me a long time to understand the importance of working with children, working *for* children. So maybe I do feel something like a sense of mission...a lot like teachers, I suppose. Sometimes I think I was lucky to fail in my first career.

Your first career?
Yeah, I started out in the '70s as a folk singer, doing the coffeehouse and campus circuit in Toronto. I wasn't exactly a smash. And I was very frustrated. But I certainly wasn't considering any career singing for children.

Someone forced you?
Not quite. My mother-in-law asked me to perform for the kids in the nursery school where she worked. Then my wife, who taught kindergarten and first grade, encouraged me to learn a few standards like "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," and I started doing more concerts, composing more songs for children. But I still wasn't ready to think of that as my career.

In fact, it wasn't until two years after my first children's album [*Singable Songs for the Very Young*, 1976] that I saw how rewarding work with children could be. I'd never turn back. My "adult" career could never be as fulfilling as what I'm doing now.

How do you feel as you watch rock 'n roll become popular with younger and younger kids?
I really think it's a shame—a crime—that we're living in a time when rock music is reaching children who just can't handle its messages, its sexual energy, its pessimism. Rock just isn't appropriate for young children. I'd almost call it child abuse. There are people out there who are ready to exploit any group of any age so long as the money flows in. And those exploiters are doing their jobs very well. The mechanics of manipulation are much more sophisticated than they were 20 years ago.

Do you see a solution?
The solution is parents. They've just got to protect their children. And that means they've got to regulate what records they buy, what TV shows they watch—what they're exposed to generally. I take a really tough line on that, but since I'm not a parent, I guess I sound presumptuous.

A bit.
Well, I know it's hard to be a parent today. And that's because, as I said, the mechanics of exploitation are so sophisticated. So I apologize to parents if I made their task sound easy. I know it's not. But I think they've got to try—maybe even join together—to end the exploitation of their children.

Can teachers help?
Well, they can try. But they've got *so much* to do already. And they do it remarkably well, despite the flak they take.

I'm not going to risk being presumptuous again, so I won't offer any advice to teachers—in part because I know my job is so much easier than theirs. I see kids for 50 minutes, on a special occasion, and *they all want to be there.* That situation would seem like heaven to most teachers.

So all I can say is that the most valuable gift any teacher can give young students is real concern, loving concern. That's a counterforce to all the negative forces today's kids have to contend with. And I'm convinced it's a powerful counterforce—one that leaves a lasting imprint.

People

Joe Di Dio

Who can offer the best insight into teenagers' feelings? Teens themselves—and 40 students at Glenbard East High School in Lombard, Ill., under the guidance of journalism teacher **Howard Spanogle**, have provided the inside scoop.

The students worked with Spanogle from start to finish, collecting questionnaires from 9,000 peers nationwide, interviewing, writing, typing, selecting quotes, and drawing cartoons.

"They persevered, applied all the techniques of good journalists, and produced a work of self-investigation with a human-interest focus and a literary touch," Spanogle says.

The 272-page, hard-cover *Teenagers Themselves* was published last year by Adama Books and distributed by Franklin Watts. The 20-chapter book is divided into sections: "self," which includes chapters on school and priorities; "issues," with chapters on violence and religion; and "world," with chapters on goals and the future.

While putting together the book, Spanogle says, the students "continued their work for our award-winning student newspaper *Echo*, did their homework, and in some cases worked part time."

Teenagers Themselves is now available in paperback through bookstores.

Prairie grass, rare in the Plains States today, is a familiar sight to students at Lewis and Clark Junior High School in Omaha, Nebr. That's thanks to science teacher **Ron Cisar**, who transplanted never-plowed big bluestem and switch grasses to a courtyard outside the school.

"In the last 100 years," Cisar explains, "farming destroyed 95 percent of the long prairie grasses native to eastern Nebraska.

"But our 10-square-meter stand isn't just a relic," he stresses. "It's here to make the prairie environment accessible to life science and biology students. They watched a monarch butterfly chrysalis unfold last year, for example."

Association member Cisar has planted other natural areas outside the school building to create a habitat for birds. His eventual plan is to have a small pond that will not only attract birds but also provide an irresistible setting for algae and various microorganisms.

Randy Hampton

Do your students pull at the Velcro fasteners on their shoes? Does the noise drive you crazy? Don't despair. Follow the lead of Lynchburg, Va., music teacher **Brenda Brooks** and make the fidgeting productive.

Under Brooks' direction, second graders at the Bedford Hills Elementary School have formed the "Electric Velcro Band." Sit-

Joe Di Dio

As Thanksgiving approaches, the Tulsa Area Vocational-Technical School is awaiting a harvest of food—canned food. Thanks to the initiative of vocational counselor **Diane Moore,** the victuals will give thousands in Oklahoma their "First Day Without Hunger."

Moore launched her "First Day..." campaign in 1982, when jobseekers from the Frost Belt ended up living under bridges in Tulsa. On Thanksgiving eve, Vo-Tech students collected canned goods, then distributed them from 230 sites.

"They learned their efforts could make a difference," Moore explains, "and the next year, they challenged other Tulsa schools to see which could collect the most cans per student." This year the effort has gone statewide—*and* nationwide, as a result of action taken at the 1985 NEA Representative Assembly in support of Moore's project.

Moore is now publishing a "We Are the World" curriculum and game to help students learn about the worldwide hunger problem. And she's at work on a program to match Oklahoma schools with sister schools overseas in joint anti-hunger projects.

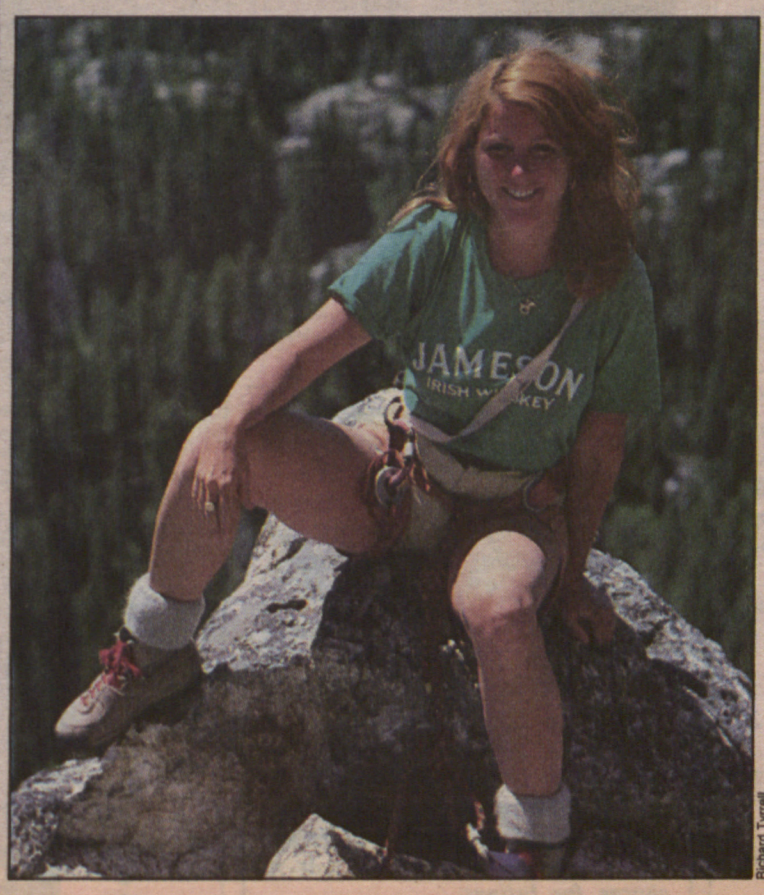
Richard Tyrrell

Aubrey Wiley

ting on the classroom floor beside Brooks' piano, they tightly close their Velcro fasteners and then rip them open to the beat of snappy songs. The sound they produce—similar to that of a percussion instrument—won them first place in last spring's Velcro Competition sponsored by Hartwick College in Oneonta, N.Y.

"When I heard about this contest to find the most innovative use for Velcro, I didn't know if the children's musical efforts would qualify," says Brooks. "But I sent off a videotape of the band in action, and it won the top prize of $50."

Besides the money, which went into the school's music fund, Velcro Fastening Systems sent each student Velcro gifts.



Richard Tyrrell

Most eighth graders don't expect their teacher to scale 1,000-foot cliffs. But then, most eighth graders don't have **Marcia Tyrrell** for a teacher.

"At first, the kids think it's crazy," says the Cobb County, Ga., NEA member. "But my photos change their minds."

Tyrrell's interest in mountain climbing began in 1980 when she met her (now) husband, Richard, an accomplished climber. Since then she's scaled Wyoming's Grand Teton and Colorado's Long's Peak—both over 14,000 feet. One reason she enjoys climbing is "the challenge to do physically two things we stress in the classroom: setting goals and persevering." Long's Peak was a 15-hour climb, she recalls. "I just kept telling myself, 'I'll climb to that next ledge,' until I finally reached the summit.

"My next goals are to climb the Matterhorn next summer and to accompany Richard at least as far as Base Camp (18,000 feet) on Mt. Everest in 1988."

RESOURCES

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SCIENCE

Oil, Gas and Deep Water Technology: The Hidden Frontier. Text and four-color photos describe how off-shore drilling for oil and gas is done. 1985 ed., 24 pp. Single copies free. American Petroleum Institute, 1220 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

How To Select, Train, and Use Volunteers in the School. Rosa Alexander Harris. Presents guidelines for recruiting, selecting, training, and using adult volunteers as teacher aides in schools. 46 pp. $5. University Press of America, Inc. 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706-9990.

CHILD SAFETY

The I CAN Safety Plan. Curriculum kit that presents a weeklong series of activities for teaching children in grades K-3 to deal safely with strangers. Consists of student activity masters (content is excerpted from *The Safe Child Book* by Sherryll Kerns Kraizer), letter to parents, four-color poster. Kits are available free from the cosponsors: National PTA/Peter Pan Peanut Butter, P.O. Box 90371, St. Paul, MN 55190.

GUIDANCE

Careers in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Describes training, certification, and typical career settings for speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Single copies free. Send SASE to Dept. C, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852.

FINE ARTS

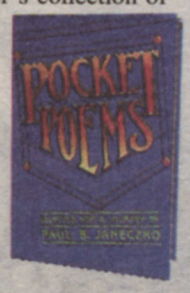
Fine Arts in the Curriculum. Frederick B. Tuttle, Jr., editor. Anthology of essays on the vital role that drama, dance, music, theater, visual arts, and creativity in general should play in the curriculum. 64 pp. Stock no. 1531-2-0-D. $7.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (or order via the postage-paid reply form on page 129 of the 1985-86 *Today's Education* magazine).

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Coal Kit. Includes samples of peat, lignite, bituminous coal, and anthracite, along with a brief history and description of each. Single orders free to teachers, counselors, librarians. American Coal Foundation, 918 16th St., N.W., Suite 404, Washington, DC 20006.

ENGLISH

Pocket Poems. Paul B. Janeczko, editor. A Maine English teacher's collection of 120 short poems by contemporary authors, selected for their likely appeal to young adults. 138 pp. $8.95. At bookstores or from Bradbury Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.



WRITING CONTEST

Kentucky Fried Chicken/Good Housekeeping "All-American Salute to Mothers" national greeting card contest. Contest offers prizes to students, their teachers, and schools, including production and distribution of winning Mother's Day card for national retail sale. Free kit contains lesson plan and contest entry information for students, grades 4-6. Mother's Day Contest, Suite 1300, 211 E. Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611.

GLOBAL EDUCATION

Global Visions: A Global Exploration of Cultures by Region for the Intermediate Grades, Using a Multi-Disciplinary Approach. Tarry L. Lindquist. A two-week instructional unit prepared by a Seattle teacher, consisting of 10 one-hour lesson plans plus additional activities and resources. Combines social studies, language arts, art, and interpersonal relations. 39 pp. Single copies free from Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Old Capitol Bldg., Mail Stop FG-11, Olympia, WA 98504.

HISTORY

1986 Civil War Calendar. Lists Civil War–era events on corresponding days in 1986. 11″ x 17″. Single copies, $6.95 postpaid; 12 or more to a school, $2.50 each postpaid. (N.Y. residents add 7 percent sales tax.) Oak Hill Publishing Co., R.R.1, Box 470, West Oak Hill Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701.

SCHOOL NURSING

An Evaluation Guide for School Nursing Practice, Designed for Self and Peer Review. National Association of School Nurses (NASN). Provides worksheets for school nurses to use to compare their program with *Standards of School Nursing Practice* (NASN, $2). $3. NASN, P.O. Box 1300, Scarborough, ME 04074.

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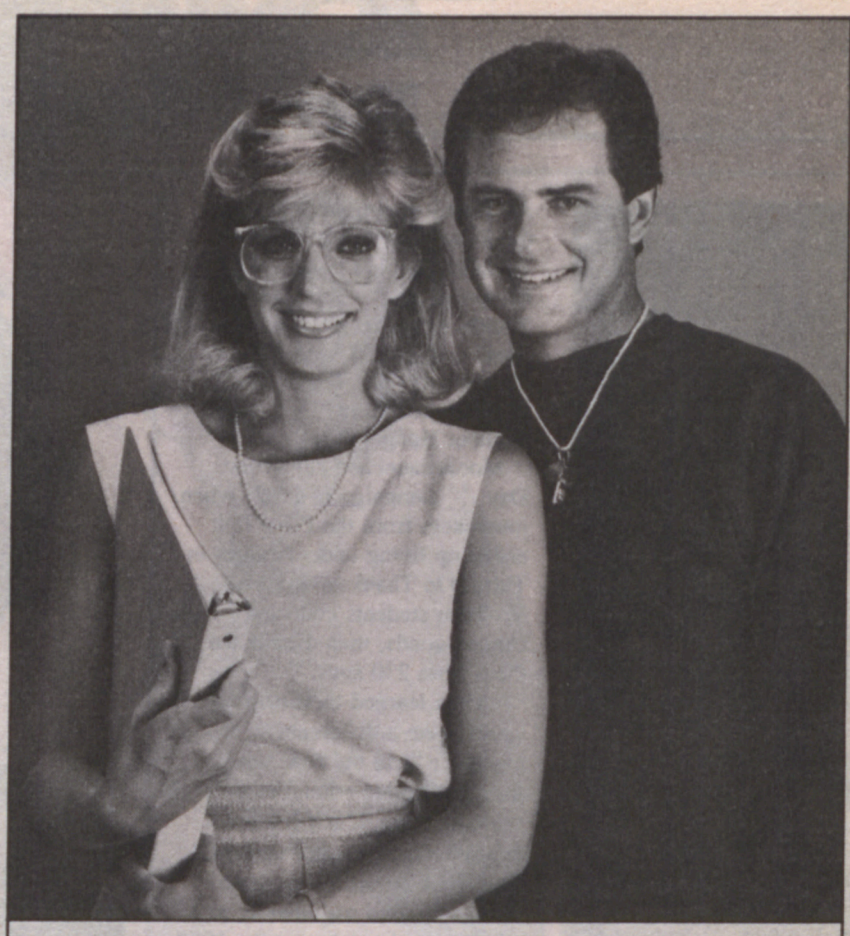

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FAMILIES

Today's Parents ARE Different

Hardly anyone—least of all school staff—would deny that parents play an indispensable role in how well their children learn.

Educators are also aware, however, that America's parents—and the families they head—have changed dramatically. The number of single-parent households has almost doubled in the past 15 years and now stands near 12 million. And 58 percent (18.4 million) of all mothers with either school-age or pre-school children are in the labor force.

These statistics translate into classrooms full of children from family structures unlike those of a generation ago. How are changing family patterns affecting the schools? Are schools meeting today's parents' expectations? Parents from three areas of the country shared their opinions with *NEA Today* assistant editor Bill Fischer.

Joe DiDio

Jim and Jean Graves' 11-year-old daughter, Janice, used to be part of a small minority—the 12.6 percent of K-12 youngsters attending private schools. When a move left the family without the option of a church-run school, they enrolled Janice at Flint Hill Elementary in Vienna, Va. The Graveses are generally happy with the switch to public school.

"The curriculum's very good," says Jean, praising the stress on the traditional basics along with computer learning.

Do the parents of an only child demand more of the schools? Probably so, says Jim. "Janice is the only one we have to concentrate on, so we're very aware of what happens at her school. I'd say we're getting our money's worth."

Nancy J. Pierce

The Clement family of Charlotte, N.C.—Wesley and Ginise, eight-year-old Nikki, ten-year-old twins Billy and John, and 17-year-old Wesley, Jr.—represents in many ways the new family structure that has emerged over the past 15 to 20 years.

Wesley and Ginise both work. He's an ophthalmologist; she shares a job as a resource specialist with the Charlotte schools. Each has a child from a previous marriage; they've had three more children together.

Since family members go this way and that on weekdays, the Clements make it a point to sit down together for Sunday breakfast and dinner. "That's our time to share our thoughts, plan the week ahead, discuss any problems," Ginise explains.

The Clements—both products of the public schools—rate the Charlotte schools highly. They're pleased, for example, that they had a choice of sending their children to the traditionally structured elementary school or to one with an 'open school' philosophy.

Would they like their children to become teachers? Wesley doesn't hesitate.

"No, not today; the pay's too low and there's not enough respect for the profession."

John Sunderland/PHOTOSTAFF Inc.

Tamie Katz and her children—Gabriel, 7, and Jennifer, 9—live in the Denver suburb of Arvada, Colo.

Divorced three years ago, Katz runs a day care center in her home. She was shocked to discover that her children's school, Stott Elementary, had no parent-teacher organization—and proceeded to create one.

She'd like to see mandatory kindergarten ("so first grade teachers wouldn't have to be tying shoes and putting on kids' coats") and a greater emphasis on improving reading skills. She applauds her school's purchase of computers, but wonders why her children get just 15 minutes' practice on them per week.

And she'd like to see some new faces at the next PTA meeting. "That's one way," she says, "that parents can show they care about what happens at school."

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RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families:

Owl/TV—*PBS, premieres week of November 3; check local listings for dates and times.* Ten half-hour programs designed to intrigue 7- to 10-year-olds with nature and science. Produced by the National Audubon Society and Canada's Young Naturalist Foundation.

Portrait of America—*Turner (cable) Broadcasting, Sunday, November 3, 6:05-7:05 p.m. ET; check local listings for repeat broadcasts.* Continuing series highlighting a different state each month. November features Hawaii.

Heart and Mind—*Discovery (cable) Channel, Tuesday, November 5, 7:30-8 p.m. ET; check local listings for repeat broadcasts.* Documentary about how a link between heartbeat and IQ—discovered within the last five years—has led to new methods for testing the intelligence of babies and toddlers.

ABC Afterschool Special—*ABC-TV, Wednesday, November 6, 4-5 p.m. ET.* "Don't Touch" addresses child abuse through the story of a teenage sitter who discovers her six-year-old charge is being molested, just as she was as a youngster. For resource materials, contact your local ABC station or ABC Community Relations, 1330 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.

Great Expectations—*Arts & Entertainment (cable) Network, beginning Wednesday, November 6, 6-6:30 p.m. ET; check local listings for repeat broadcasts and future episodes.* Charles Dickens' classic in 12 episodes.

Pickwick Papers—*Arts & Entertainment (cable) Network, beginning Thursday, November 7, 6:30-7 p.m. ET; check local listings for repeat broadcasts and future episodes.* Charles Dickens' first novel in 12 episodes.

ABC Weekend Special—*ABC, Saturday, November 9, 12-12:30 p.m. ET.* "The Bollo Caper." Rebroadcast of an animated cartoon about endangered species, based on a book by Art Buchwald.

The Canterville Ghost—*PBS, Monday, November 18, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Adaptation of the Oscar Wilde story about a haunted English mansion.

Comet Halley—*PBS, Tuesday, November 26, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Documentary about the interplanetary visitor that's heading Earthward once again.

Adventures of Doc Savage—*National Public Radio; check local listings for dates and times.* The comic book hero of the 1930's comes to life in this half-hour series.

Danger Bay—*Disney (cable) Channel; check local listings for dates and times.* Family adventure about oceanography and marine life, set in Vancouver.

In the News—*CBS-TV, Saturdays; check local listings for times.* Two-minute segments about current events, designed for children and aired throughout the day.

The Velveteen Rabbit—*HBO; check local listings for dates and times.* Animation about how toys come to life, based on the story by Marjory Williams.

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Social Security: Not for Everyone

Amid all the struggles to protect Social Security and Medicare benefits, there's another tough battle under way that's received less press. The issue is whether public employees who developed strong, viable retirement systems when they were initially excluded from Social Security will now be forced into the system.

It's a critical battle, with dire financial implications for almost one-third of NEA's members—those now covered by state or local retirement plans that oftentimes provide better benefits than Social Security does.

When Social Security was created in 1935, each state had the chance to decide whether its public employees—including school employees—would participate. Fourteen states—now including almost 600,000 NEA members—opted out: Rhode Island, Maine, Connecticut, Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana, California, Alaska, Missouri, Illinois, Nevada, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Texas.

A significant number of local school districts in over a half-dozen states are also not covered by Social Security programs.

The current fight is over congressional proposals to mandate participation in Social Security by all the nation's public employees, at the federal, state, and local levels alike.

When Congress began wrestling with ways to reduce the mounting federal deficit last summer, any move that could increase federal revenue had appeal. Forcing public employees to participate in Social Security—and thereby pay federal taxes into the program—was high on the list of 'revenue-enhancing' possibilities, despite the fact that many of those employees have comparable—or even better—protection under state-developed programs.

Both the Senate and House are already considering proposals to mandate total public employee participation in at least the Medicare portion of Social Security.

"Using Social Security as a budget-balancing mechanism is cynical politics," argues NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell. "Since Social Security taxes are earmarked and can't be used for anything but financing Social Security benefits, they have no impact on the overall deficit. Mandated coverage would only be a meaningless numbers game. Some 600,000 public school employees would be victims of an accounting sham."

Forcing Social Security taxes on employees not currently covered would reduce their take-home pay, of course. A number of states not now in the system would be forced to rework their entire retirement programs. The Medicare plan would drain 2.9 percent of payroll from school district budgets. And many districts that have replaced employer Social Security contributions with alternative employee investment plans could face severe economic and legal problems.

"This is simply too important an issue to be treated as a political football," says NEA-Retired President Joe Westbrook. "Congress must rethink these proposals."

NEA members are gearing up to fight the move for mandatory coverage. Association leaders from the non-Social Security states have already held several meetings with NEA leaders to plan strategies. Members of the Association's Congressional Contact Team have also met with members of Congress on this question.

"This issue is too important to too many school employees for us to just sit by and watch it happen," stresses Futrell. "Social Security is basically an employee benefit. Critical decisions affecting those benefits shouldn't be made without employee input. And NEA intends to make sure Congress has that input—now or at the ballot box next November. It's their choice when they would rather listen."

—Eddy Gattis

Savings Options

Innovative programs designed to help you *manage* your money toward retirement seem to be appearing as rapidly as crab grass on a well manicured lawn. Many of the new plans advertise steady growth, or portray themselves as hedges against inflation, or promise eventual tax advantages.

But the tried-and-true passbook savings account is still America's most popular way of building up potential retirement income. And long-term savings accounts—providing a fixed return on regular deposits over a specific number of years—provide an important option for anyone wanting to build a nest egg for the retirement years.

Long-term savings accounts have certain advantages—most notably the protection of federal insurance on your deposits. While there may be a penalty for withdrawing principal prior to the end of the savings term, that penalty is not so serious that it should discourage you from this type of investment.

The accompanying chart gives a clear picture of just what regular saving in the traditional sense can do over a 20-year period.

One caution from the experts, however. While traditional and long-term savings can provide unique security in *building* a retirement fund, drawing on insured savings accounts for yearly income during retirement may prove to be a mistake. A financial planning guide published by *50 Plus* magazine warns against the "put and take" approach—putting so much in the bank each month while you're working, and then taking out so much each month during retirement—until you're flat broke!

The same bank that dutifully helped turn your $200-a-month deposit into $88,286 over a 20-year period will gladly set up a program to send portions of that money back to you on a regular schedule while the bulk remains in the account drawing interest. Bank officials will explain how you can withdraw 10 percent of your money each year for 20 years after age 65, if your money earns 8 percent interest during the entire 20-year period.

But lost in that equation is the fact that money matters rarely remain constant—a prerequisite for the bankers' calculations. While long-term savings may make sense in accumulating money for retirement, there are too many pitfalls to make long-term withdrawal plans a safe bet.

No one can guarantee the continued interest rates necessary for your money to last 20 years past retirement, much less the remainder of your life. You could be the exception that outlives the actuarial tables. Or inflation could turn your monthly withdrawal amount into little more than starvation wages.

As the *50 Plus* guide concludes, "It's a mistake to think of retirement planning as just an accumulation of dollars. It is, rather, the building of a pool of *buying power* that is the ultimate goal—the more buying power the better." A comfortably financed retirement program "requires setting up a realistic pension plan while you are working plus accumulating capital which you manage to the best of your ability in order to get the most income out of the current investment market."

—Eddy Gattis

How Savings Accounts Can Build Over 20 Years

Starting at age 45 you save each month:	Total amount you deposit by age 65:	Total in your account including dividends at age 65:
$ 20	4,800	$ 8,828
40	9,600	17,656
50	12,000	22,071
75	18,000	33,107
100	24,000	44,143
125	30,000	55,179
200	48,000	88,286
416	99,840	183,634

The figures are based on a 5.50% effective annual yield where interest is compounded daily and paid from day of deposit if money is left in the account until the end of the quarter.

Reprinted with permission from Money Plan for Your Retirement, *a guide published by* 50 Plus *magazine.*

BOOK BEAT

Flunking the Test Makers

In *None of the Above: Behind the Myth of Scholastic Aptitude*, magazine writer David Owen demonstrates—precisely and with examples—what he perceives to be the conceptual and structural flaws in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

He also zeroes in on the faults of the nonprofit organization that designs the SAT and countless other entrance examinations for higher education and occupations—the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

We read about weaknesses and contradictions in every aspect of the SAT: conceptualization, construction, administration, scoring. In Owen's view, the "aptitude" scores that finally emerge are worthless—telling more about prospective college students' socioeconomic status, including their opportunities to buy coaching on the SAT, than anything else.

Owen concludes that use of the SAT intensifies the effects of economic inequality on college admissions. This disturbs him. So does the effect on high school curriculums of an exam whose items are often deliberately ambiguous and misleading.

None of the Above: Behind the Myth of Scholastic Aptitude

by David Owen

(Houghton Mifflin. 327 pp. $16.95.)

Overall, his pages are tinged with sarcasm and disdain for ETS, the SAT specifically, and standardized tests in general. This is understandable in light of the doublespeak he appears to have heard from the ETS officials who would talk to him. (Many were ordered not to.)

Owen suggests what might replace the SAT: national examinations in specific courses, an approach that would make teaching and coaching the same thing. He doesn't think anyone will buy this, so he argues in favor of simply abolishing the SAT.

ETS's examination program for prospective teachers—the National Teachers Examination (NTE)—doesn't escape Owen's scathing analysis either: "a simple-minded response to a very complicated problem."

My own ETS connection has been a cooperative one, in contrast to David Owen's adversarial stance. ETS has invited me several times to serve as a teacher-adviser on the NTE—perhaps because of my work on NEA's "Good Testing Is..." workshops.

I've found ETS staff receptive to the concerns of teacher-advisers We've told them their existing tests for prospective teachers are too narrow, and they're looking at new approaches, such as ways to evaluate classroom management skills.

Much of the problem with standardized tests is due to their being machine-graded. The mechanical, narrow, rote responses they call for are devoid of creative or analytical thought about real intellectual questions.

David Owen has emphatically pointed out how such tests can negatively affect secondary education. They can do the same to teacher education. Those of us who currently teach must work with ETS and other test makers to make sure national admissions tests are fair to all and constructive in their educational effects.

Reviewed by Nancy Jewell, who teaches English at Waller Junior High School in Enid, Okla., and serves on the NEA Board of Directors.

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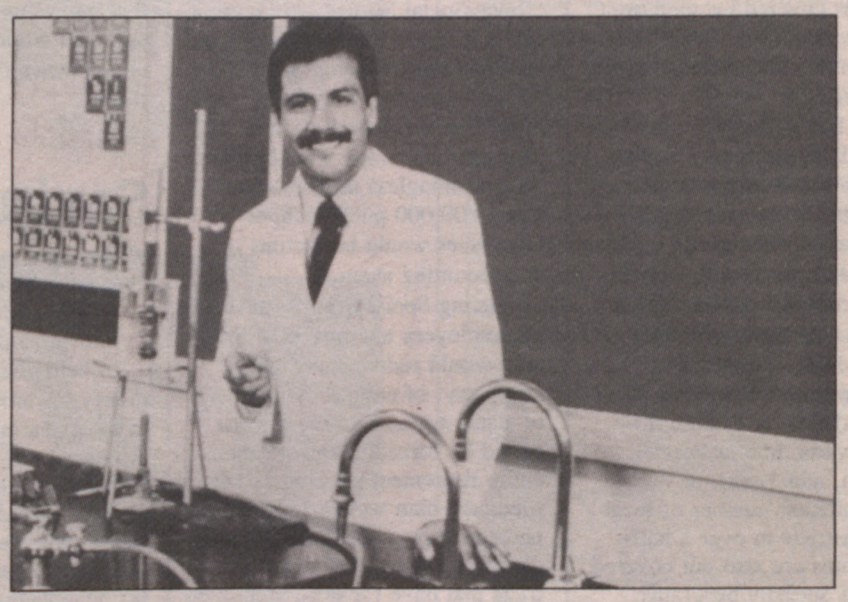

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PERSONALLY SPEAKING

When Your Wheels Aren't Your Own

Leasing a Car: Is It for You?

You've seen newspaper ads offering a leased luxury car for the same monthly payments you make on your economy model. Perhaps you have a friend or neighbor who leases a new car every few years. "This leasing seems to have something going for it," you say to yourself, "but is it for me?"

Leasing is indeed growing in popularity, as Americans place a bigger and bigger premium on flexibility and convenience. Leased vehicles are now estimated to account for 10 percent of the cars on the road (30 percent, in California). Before you rush out to lease your dream car, however, rid yourself of these common myths:

Myth #1: Leasing is cheaper than buying. Despite the fancy financial mumbo jumbo favored by leasing agents, buying a car with cash is still the cheapest way to drive. Financing a car is second, and leasing is third. In the long run, leasing can cost you up to 50 percent *more* than buying the same vehicle.

Myth #2: If you can't get a car loan, lease a car. The fact is, if nobody will lend you the money for a new car, nobody will lease you one either.

Myth #3: Leasing results in tax breaks. If the IRS lets you write off your auto expenses, it doesn't care whether you lease the car or not. (Leasing does make preparing your tax returns a lot simpler, though.)

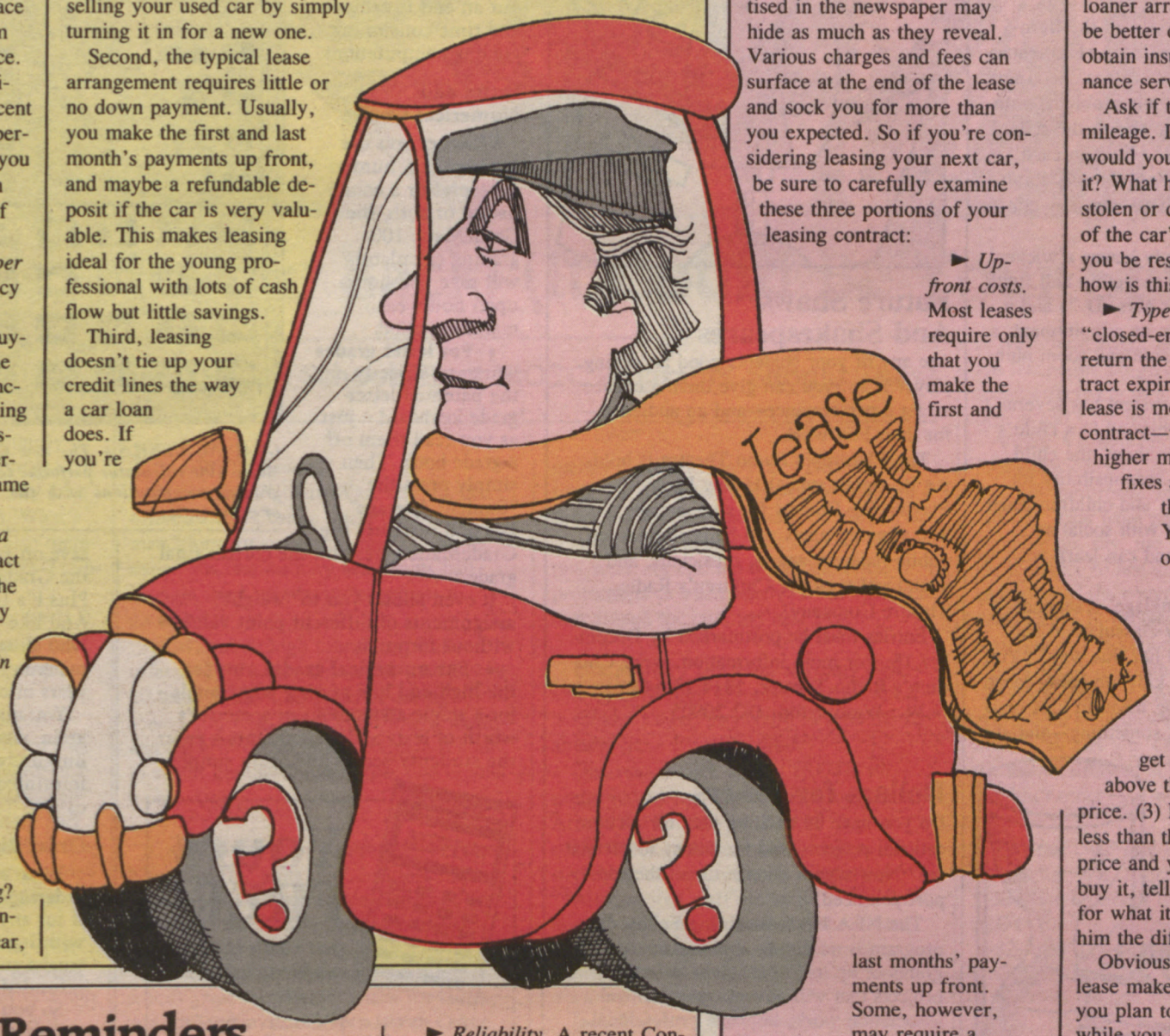
Why, then, the growing interest in automobile leasing? First, leasing can be very convenient. Since it's not your car, a lot of the headaches of owning a car belong to someone else. Most leases include a maintenance package, and some even provide a loaner should your car have to be in the shop. If it turns out to be a real lemon, you can always refuse to make any lease payments until the problem is fixed. Best of all, at the end of the lease, you can avoid the hassles of selling your used car by simply turning it in for a new one.

Second, the typical lease arrangement requires little or no down payment. Usually, you make the first and last month's payments up front, and maybe a refundable deposit if the car is very valuable. This makes leasing ideal for the young professional with lots of cash flow but little savings.

Third, leasing doesn't tie up your credit lines the way a car loan does. If you're about to buy a home or start a business, this could be an important advantage.

Fourth, leasing allows you to drive more car for the same payments. If it's important to you, you can "rent" the luxury you can't afford to buy.

Leasing is a viable alternative for many people, but it's definitely not for everyone. The cheapest way to get around is still to buy your own auto and keep it humming as long as you can.



Auto Leasing Contracts: Always Read the Fine Print

Leasing an automobile takes as much consumer savvy as buying one. Just because you're leasing and not buying doesn't mean you shouldn't shop around. Not only are most auto dealers now getting into the leasing market, but so are some banks.

The low monthly fees advertised in the newspaper may hide as much as they reveal. Various charges and fees can surface at the end of the lease and sock you for more than you expected. So if you're considering leasing your next car, be sure to carefully examine these three portions of your leasing contract:

► *Up-front costs.* Most leases require only that you make the first and last months' payments up front. Some, however, may require a deposit. If so, ask whether this deposit is refundable. Does it accrue interest? What does the deposit cover? Obviously, the less money you're asked to pay up front, the better.

► *Monthly payments.* Before you sign anything, be sure you understand what the monthly payments do—and don't—cover. The payment touted in the ad may have been for the basic model. Options cost extra. Do the payments include things like taxes, insurance, maintenance contracts, and loaner arrangements? You may be better off financially if you obtain insurance and maintenance services on your own.

Ask if there's a limit on mileage. If so, how much would you pay if you exceeded it? What happens if the auto is stolen or destroyed (how much of the car's market value would you be responsible for, and how is this value calculated)?

► *Type of lease.* In a "closed-end" lease, you simply return the car when the contract expires. An "open-end" lease is more complicated. The contract—which has slightly higher monthly payments—fixes a value for the car at the end of the term. You then have three options: (1) Buy the car at the predetermined price. (2) If the car has appreciated in value, tell the dealer to sell it. In this way, you get to keep anything above the agreed-upon price. (3) If the car is worth less than the predetermined price and you don't want to buy it, tell the dealer to sell it for what it will bring, and pay him the difference.

Obviously, an open-ended lease makes the most sense if you plan to take care of the car while you have it. A rule of thumb is that open-ended leases make sense only if you drive your car 10,000 miles a year or less. If you drive your car long and hard, stick to a closed-end lease and a maintenance contract.

Rental Car Reminders

If you'll be renting an automobile soon, there's good news and bad. The good news is that you've never had more choices than you do today in selecting a company to do business with. You can choose one of the big national firms, a local "budget" company, or one of the many "rent-a-jalopy" firms that specialize in renting used cars for low rates.

The bad news is that with all these choices, selecting a rental car is no longer as simple as comparing daily rates. You'll have to ask a lot of questions. Be sure to consider—

► *Rates.* How will your rate be computed? A straight daily fee, mileage charges, or a combination? Are there special rates available? Can you save money by picking up your car one day later or earlier? Are you eligible for a discount?* Does the company reimburse you if you return the car with more gasoline than it had when you picked it up?

► *Convenience.* Where will you pick up the car? If it's not close, is there a shuttle? If not, what will cabfare cost? Also be sure you understand the drop-off charges if you plan to return the car to a different location.

► *Reliability.* A recent Consumers Union survey showed little difference between the major rental companies in reliability of their vehicles, but for smaller companies, reliability may be a factor. Some companies put restrictions on the distance from their facilities you can drive the car.

► *Liability.* Before you rent any vehicle, check with your agent to learn whether your regular auto insurance will cover you. If not, for how much of the rental car's value would you be held responsible? Most rental car firms will sell you a "Collision Damage Waiver" that waives your responsibility for all but a small portion of this liability, but at $8 a day or more, it's an expensive way to be protected.

* As an NEA member, you're eligible for a discount whenever you rent a car from Hertz. For your free identification card, write to NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe St., Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850.

Truth in Advertising

The Federal Trade Commission has set specific guidelines with which auto leasing companies must comply. FTC regulations require all auto leasing ads to include—

► The total amount of any payment that must be made up front, or a statement that no such payment is required.

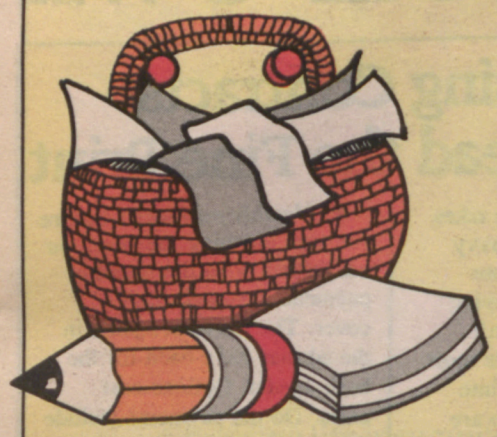
► The number, amounts, and due dates of scheduled payments, and the total of such payments under the lease.

► A statement that the customer has the option to purchase the leased automobile, and at what price.

► A statement on whether the customer has any liability for the difference between the estimated value of the leased car and its actual resale value at the end of the term.

RESOURCES

Idea Exchange



A Basketful Of Problems

Counselor Carol Dinklage of the Barnstable-West Barnstable (Mass.) Elementary School has developed a way to encourage children to bring her their problems without being referred. She begins the school year by spending half an hour in each class, K-5, talking with the pupils about problems they might have and how counseling can help.

After that, she simply leaves a wicker basket in the school's reception hall, with a sign ("Questions for Mrs. D.") and a pad and pencil. To get an appointment, a child can just leave name and room number in the basket.

Dinklage says this system has several advantages: she can respond to a child's needs as the child sees them, the child starts right off taking responsibility for attacking the problem, and children learn that they can get help with social and emotional problems and can learn ways to solve them.

Last year, says Dinklage, a second grader brought a new classmate to her office and introduced her this way: "You can go to Mrs. D. if kids are being mean to you or you're being mean to kids or if you're worried about something—and she helps you solve it."

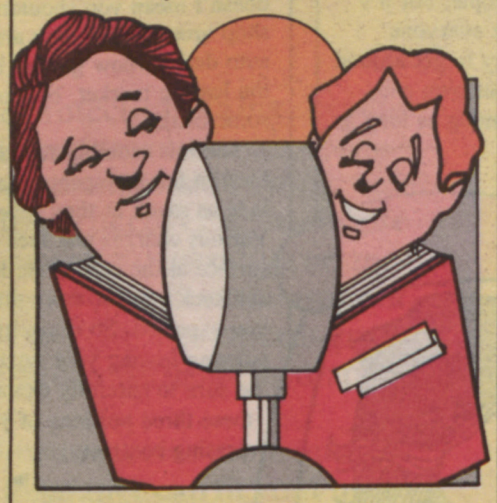
Research Most Likely To Succeed

If you're a secondary teacher looking for a new field for student research papers, especially in the social sciences, a fresh source of topics and material is probably right in your school. Anthony J. Mastroianni of Palatine, Ill., directs his sociology students at Barrington High School to a stack of yearbooks going back several decades. The assignment: analyze the characteristics of the different decades or half-decades.

For each decade, students compile a data sheet that lists clubs, social events, fads, fashions, and changes in school personnel and buildings. They examine local and national events that affected the school: for example, the Rocketry Club showed up in 1958, shortly after Sputnik.

Specific assignments range from narrating the changes in the school and corresponding changes in the society over the past three decades, to evaluating the realism of a print, film, or TV presentation set in a particular period, to measuring the society at different periods against sociological categories.

Mastroianni, who has used this method to get good original work from his students since the late 1960's, says he now has the extra task of dealing with students' comments when their researches into ancient history turn up a picture of him.



Future Shaws And Shakespeares

Are any of your students good at writing plays? If so, you can give them a chance to get a performance—and an audience—for their best work.

The Children's Radio Theatre is holding its eighth annual Henny Penny Playwriting Contest for students age 5-17. The winning plays will be performed on public radio by actors, musicians, and sound artists of the Children's Radio Theatre Company.

Entries must be postmarked by December 15. For more information, write Children's Radio Theater, 1314 14th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

Dollars for Do-ers

Do you have an exciting idea for an educational project—and no money to carry it out? Now's your chance to get the support you need!

The NEA Hilda Maehling Fellowship program is accepting applications for grants of up to $2,500 each to fund projects that will advance professional association work, improve professional development, or develop professional tools and techniques. Individual NEA members, groups of members, and local associations all are eligible to apply.

The fellowship program is administered by NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE). Application deadline is December 1. For details write NFIE, Suite 628, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or call (202) 822-7840.

If you're using a new classroom activity—or a new twist on an old one—and it works wonders, why not share it with your colleagues across the country? Send a brief description (along with any photos, sketches, or charts that would help to explain it) to Idea Exchange, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

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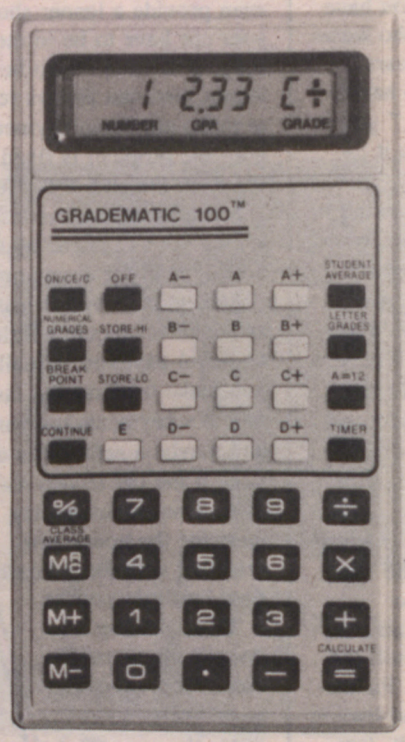
- **In either grading mode, you can** enter up to 99 grades per student and the calculator automatically keeps Class Averages for up to 99 students per class.
- **You can even time tests or** activities with GradeMatic's built-in Stop Watch/Timer Alarm (with 3-second buzzer).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THE MILITARY ELECTIVE

Randy Hampton

If It Salutes, Salute Back! (It Could Be Your Student)

Many High Schools Host JROTC Programs. Should They?

Army! Navy! Air Force! Marines! Right here in the corridors of our nation's secondary schools.

But far from being invaders from a leaner, meaner world, these militarily garbed youngsters—male and female—are students. Like everybody else, they take algebra, world history, English. What's different about them is they're also members of the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC).

Some 220,000 students across the U.S. belong to 1,375 JROTC units—two-thirds of them Army, most of them in public high schools.

JROTC units get into the schools because school officials invite them. The military agrees to provide a training program. Military affairs—drill, marksmanship, military "doctrine"—are only part of the curriculum. The rest—the part that attracts educators—is devoted to developing leadership, character, citizenship.

The leadership opportunity is what attracted Cadet First Lieutenant Michael Wilson to the Army JROTC unit at South High School in Omaha, Nebr. Now a senior, Wilson (*photo, center*) is battalion commander.

"In JROTC, students rather than the instructor are put in charge," he points out. "Right now I'm responsible for making day-to-day decisions about scheduling the rifle team, the drill team, land navigation exercises. I also designate the commanders who'll be in charge."

The physical side of the program appeals to some students. As a freshman three years ago at Omaha's Northwest High School, Ellen Pedersen saw JROTC as "a change of pace" and "looked forward to the chance to learn first aid, to fire a gun." Pedersen also is enthusiastic about the week-long course Omaha cadets take every fall at Fort Riley, Kansas. "I like running the confidence course and rappeling down a rock face," she says.

The enrollment of women in JROTC was authorized in the early 1970s, and women now constitute about a third of all Army JROTC cadets.

Before the Vietnam War, schools that offered JROTC often made the program mandatory for male students. But by the early '70s, antimilitary sentiments had brought most mandatory programs to an end.

Now, public high schools typically offer JROTC as an elective in grades 9 or 10 through 12. Classes meet during school hours perhaps three times a week, and the armed services encourage schools to award credit—Omaha gives two credits a year.

Curriculums vary among the services. Naval JROTC units may drill less than Army units, and Air Force programs are reputed to offer more high tech instruction than the others.

In the usual arrangement, the high school gives the JROTC space for instruction, drill, marksmanship practice (some schools have indoor rifle ranges), and a secure room where the rifles and ammunition—they're usually the real thing—are stored under lock and key.

In return, the military supplies the cadets with uniforms, weapons, ammunition, textbooks, and other materials.

JROTC instructors are retired commissioned and noncommissioned military officers. Both the school district and the military must approve their appointments. They also split the cost of paying them. The service continues to pay their pensions; the school district makes up the difference between the instructors' pensions and the amount they'd receive if recalled to active duty. Then the military reimburses the school for about half that amount.

JROTC instructors are considered faculty members; many are also Association members. In Kansas, NEA-Shawnee Mission went to court for two instructor members RIF'd from Navy JROTC positions when Shawnee Mission West High School dropped its program in 1982. The school district argued that JROTC instructors were not entitled to the same RIF protections as other teachers; the Association argued the contrary and won.

Is a military presence actually desirable in U.S. high schools? This question is seldom asked, especially in schools that already have JROTC units.

One reason may be that JROTC programs have been around for a long time. Army JROTC goes back to 1916, and some Army units have antecedents stretching back into the last century.

Also, school staff members see positive things happening to students who belong. (It's easy to know who the cadets are: they wear their uniforms at least once a week on "uniform day.")

Jack Prall and Gene Swanson, guidance counselors at Shawnee Mission North High School, see the program as one more avenue for success and achievement in their 1,400-student school. "How many kids can shine in athletics?" Prall asks.

Roger Rea, president of the Omaha Education Association and science teacher at Northwest High, adds, "JROTC kids are leaders in lab groups because they can speak effectively to a group and give orders and have them carried out."

Victor Valdivia, principal of Ysleta Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, singles out the broadening effects: "Through JROTC, kids from poor families who compete on, say, the rifle or drill team, get a chance to see university campuses and parts of the country they'd never see otherwise." In his own high school days, Valdivia was battalion commander at El Paso's Jefferson High School.

Jo Jean Johnson, Association member and school secretary at MacArthur High School, in Lawton, Okla., says, "I see the availabilility of scholarships these kids wouldn't otherwise get."

But not everyone is a JROTC fan. Burlington, Vt., history teacher Jim Donoghue observed the birth of a Naval JROTC unit at Burlington High School in 1982—and its death this year for lack of student interest.

"I never thought it belonged in a high school," Donoghue explains. "The JROTC texts seemed simplistic, encouraging kids to accept authority without question. That's the opposite of what we're trying to do in the history program—teach kids to reason, to think, to question."

—Nancy R. Needham

JROTC Obligations and Benefits

Participating in JROTC *won't* get your students—

- A commission in the Armed Forces.
- An obligation to serve in the Armed Forces.
- The possibility of being called up to active duty in an emergency.

But it *will* give them—

- A chance to win a Presidential nomination (in addition to the usual Congressional nominations) to one of the military academies.
- A chance to win one of the ROTC college scholarships available to outstanding JROTC cadets.
- Credit for at least the first year of college ROTC (except Navy ROTC).
- Advanced promotion upon enlistment in the Armed Forces.

Letters

Taken for a Ride?

You treat the teacher's ride on the space shuttle ("People," October) as a boon to education. Far from it. The space shuttle program is a military program: it has been from its inception and continues to be. Bringing teachers into it has been part of the Pentagon-NASA public relations attempt to persuade people of all professions and walks of life to support the militarization of space. A senator, a doctor, a teacher: as the headlines said, "They're treated like royalty."

But the ideal of America is not militarism, and teachers are not agents or tools of the military. Teachers should advocate and exemplify openness to diversity, cosmopolitanism, and toleration—values antithetical to the force, violence, and enmity of the Cold War, which the shuttle represents.

James R. Bennett
Fayetteville, Arkansas

'Jefferson's Wall'

Concerning your October "You and the Law" column, "Preserving Jefferson's Wall," it's evident the author has never read the First Amendment to the Constitution, because the concept of "separation between Church and State" is not addressed in that document!

Neither Jefferson nor the First Amendment address the idea of a wall between government and religion—only that government not *establish* a state religion. What a difference!

The premises of the two concepts are totally unrelated. We have come to believe that the Constitution provides a barrier between church and state because we have been told often enough that it does. That belief is erroneous.

Curt. Renz
Ames, Iowa

Ed. note: The U.S. Constitution does not interpret itself. If it did, the Supreme Court would be superfluous. Thomas Jefferson was among the earliest students of the First Amendment to insist that the Establishment Clause was intended to erect a sturdy "wall of separation between church and state." And Jefferson, of course, had the benefit of direct contact with those who debated, discussed, and penned the Constitution.

Priorities Backward?

You reported ("Trends," October) a Gallup Poll showing that Americans feel that high school teachers' salary should exceed elementary teachers.' Someone out there has missed the crux of the education problem in this country.

If anyone deserves the higher salary it is the early childhood (K-3) teacher, who has the awesome responsibility of setting the foundation on which future studies must draw. Without a solid foundation, children will not go on to become better students.

The mental and physical pressure on teachers is generally heavier in early childhood than at the higher grades. The public needs to be told how little time the early childhood teacher has to herself during the school day.

A building or a business is not constructed from the top down. Let's get our priorities correct.

B. Pinkerton
Jacksonville, Alabama

Empty Words?

It comes as no surprise that you chose a quote from Richard Celeste for your October "Well Put!" column. Those of us in Ohio know only too well that our governor is a qualified expert in "what to say."

One need only look at the sad state of education in Ohio, however, to see that he is sorely lacking in the area of "what to do."

Thomas A. Wick
Cincinnati, Ohio

'Fed Up'

Re your October letter from a parent whose child had been killed by a TV falling off an AV cart she was pushing: here in Davenport, Iowa, our area education agency (a sort of superregional library for schools, funded by the state) made us aware of this incident and others. Horrified, we have asked our teachers not to let children move heavy equipment around anymore.

I am angered by the statement in the parent's letter that "Few educators will have the true professionalism to step forward, due to severe peer pressures." This is a stupid statement. The grieved parents may have had uncaring reactions from a few teachers, but if they would spend a little more time talking to several more teachers, they would soon realize that most teachers care intensely for children. It is their peer pressure that brings the few into line.

(On the other hand, no matter what the parents' opinion of us, it's never smart to insult someone when you're asking them for something.)

I'm fed up with parents' making the assumption that most teachers don't care, don't hold professional ideals, and don't listen to reason.

The more I think about this, the madder I get. Why doesn't this parent's school board allocate sufficient money to provide custodial help, so neither children *nor* teachers have to undertake dangerous activities? Why haven't voters in the district approved enough funds? It's just easier to expect the teacher to do everything—easier to blame the teacher for everything.

Beth F. Clemensen
Davenport, Iowa

Which End's Up?

About that picture of the Earth on your June cover, and the letters from readers taking you to task for it: since when is there up and down in the universe?

Please don't confuse the cartographers' convention of north at the top with the order of the universe. Your photo was fine!

Mary McIver
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Teachers of the Year

As president of the National State Teachers of the Year organization, I would like to thank you for the excellent coverage given to the state teachers of the year in the 1985-86 *Today's Education*. It was a pleasure to read their lesson plans.

Strange as it may seem, a dilemma for some of us who have been Teachers of the Year is that we're given a big flurry of attention upon receipt of the award—and then quickly forgotten. So it was especially gratifying to see the 1985 teachers receive recognition just a month or two before announcement of the 1986 Teachers of the Year.

Our organization is working on a profile book on these teachers, as well as a speakers' bureau listing those Teachers of the Year who are available to make presentations on educational issues.

Our members make a dynamic group, concerned in every way with public education and especially with promoting quality teaching. We would welcome the opportunity to be of assistance to *NEA Today* readers.

Inga H. Smith
249 W. Dunedin Road
Columbus, OH 43214

Teach Peace

Nineteen American colleges offer degree programs in "Peace Studies." Congress has authorized an Institute of Peace. But where can I find any resources for teaching about peace? Is anyone out there developing curricula on peace for our public schools?

Peace Studies is needed for more than intellectual reasons. Research conducted recently for the American Psychiatric Association indicates that more than half our children believe there will be a nuclear war during their lifetime. Children in the "nuclear shadow" are growing up with a "nightmarish terror of death and destruction, feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, distrust and cynicism, and a premature loss of innocence," the study found.

Teaching about peace, peacemakers, and peacemaking can convey a sense of hope while enlightening students on what peacemakers have done in the past and are doing right now to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

Bob Krasnansky
Ellicott City, Maryland

Keep Smiling

We want to thank your readers for their overwhelming response to our May letter requesting examples of the classroom use of humor. We've received hundreds of replies, making it difficult for us to respond to each correspondent individually.

We're still getting mail from all over the country. We've heard from teachers of gifted students as well as teachers of the disabled—from inner-city schools to a Navajo reservation in Arizona.

It's clear from the tone of these letters that there are still plenty of dedicated, intelligent, and loving men and women working in school systems around our nation who know how to use humor as an effective teaching tool—not only for their students' benefit but also to keep their own sense of balance.

Some readers asked us where they can find our book *The Smile Connection: How To Use Humor in Dealing with People*. If it's not in your bookstore by the end of December, it can be ordered from Prentice-Hall, Customer Service Department, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 for $8.95 (paperback).

Esther Blumenfeld
Lynne Alpern
Atlanta, Georgia

Grateful Parent of Nine Takes Time Out To Say 'Thank You, Teacher'

Some parents leave teachers in limbo and let them wonder which lessons and problem solutions, if any, make an impression at home. As the mother of nine, ages 3 to 26, I plead guilty.

For decades we left you to your job because you were doing it well and we were so busy struggling with our own. But now I'd like to take time to say, "Thank you, teacher."

Thank you to a new young kindergarten teacher for the Art Project I Remember Most. She'll never know what it meant to me, then mother of five, when our second son brought home that sheet of green paper with the stand-up patterns of plate, cup, and silverware pasted on in the proper places. Somehow, she had convinced him it was a model for everyday use, and he studied it while he set the table—until it was tattered and worn, and helping had become a habit.

Thank you, every principal who has ever called, however terrible the news. Parents want to know when a son forges a note about a doctor's appointment.

Thank you to the counselor who once absolutely overshadowed a teenage son until he got his act together. He fussed and complained, but she continued without a qualm. "It is my cross in life to bear your bad disposition," she told him cheerfully. He still refers to her as "the old battle-ax," but his grades went from D's and F's to A's and B's. I will always love and admire that woman.

When we learned our seven-month-old, Teresa, had Down's syndrome, nothing eased the blow as much as the prompt appearance of two teachers and a physical therapist from the area education agency. They picked out and raved about every skill she had. The ones she did not—of which we were painfully aware—they either ignored or planned how we could help her achieve.

Teresa is three now, and we are on the brink of a deep and lengthy educational process most people will never know. These specially trained and gifted teachers are helping to make it an adventure and a joy. As a result, we're seeing all those past and present teachers with newly opened eyes.

We stand in awe of your ability to deal daily with so many bodies and hearts and souls, to mold them when just maintaining them is overwhelming work. Like parenthood, your job is much more important than the pay scale can begin to prove. It's a labor of love, humanly handled hour by hour.

There may be many parents from whom you never hear. They may not yet know themselves how much they appreciate you. But for all of them, and for all the teachers I may never have told, thank you.

Monica Brandies
Wilton, Iowa

TEACHERS OFTEN DISAGREE ABOUT HOW THEY SHOULD DRESS—
MANY SAY YOUR CLOTHING SHOULD REFLECT YOUR JOB'S IMPORTANCE—
I FIND IT HARD TO WORK IN A TUXEDO—
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SCHOOLVIEW

Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

Debate

Elementary math: is it time to ban the calculators?

Jill Cannefax

Evie Andrews has been teaching first grade at Tualatin (Oregon) Elementary School for 20 years. An active member and former officer of the Tigard Education Association, she was selected Oregon Teacher of the Year in 1984. Children in Andrews' first grade classes get strong doses of reading, study skills, and math—but there are no calculators in her room.

YES

Electronic calculators have no place in elementary school classrooms until students understand the basic mathematical processes. Premature use of calculators hinders the ability to develop these vital understandings.

The foundation of all mathematics is the understanding of number. For first graders, learning to recognize the numeral 1 or 2 and being able to physically show one or two objects is a critical step in learning mathematics—one on which the ability to count and understand value is predicated.

A child should be able to visualize or recognize a small number of items—say four or six—without having to count them. Unless children are given a chance to practice these basic skills, the lighted number on the calculator will have no meaning for them.

Once children understand number, the processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division become the focuses of mathematics learning. The critical components of these four processes are number facts.

Number facts that are memorized and stored in the brain for recall on a moment's notice are as useful and important to a six-year-old as they are to an adult. We may use calculators to balance our checkbooks, but we rely on our knowledge of number facts to do on-the-spot calculations to determine if we can afford the lamp or jacket we find on sale. Young children similarly need to be able to figure for themselves—without running for the nearest calculator—how many 5¢ or 10¢ candies their quarters will buy or, once bought, how the candy can be shared equally with two friends.

But memorizing number facts is hard work. Calculators can take away the incentive to do this work.

Besides, in some circumstances calculators are just too *slow*. For example, floor traders at the commodities exchanges memorize number multiples so they can respond to a bid quickly. Children learn such number patterns when they count by twos, fours, elevens, or any other number. When they rely solely on calculators, their computation skills deteriorate.

Estimating is another very important math skill that can't be learned on a calculator. As adults, we estimate what our groceries or lunch will cost, or how many square feet of carpet are needed for the living room. A child needs to be able to estimate answers well enough to recognize when the calculator's answer is way off, indicating that a number was miskeyed.

Students learn to estimate and evaluate through experience: through making estimates and then checking them out. For example: How many vertical lines are on a pumpkin? How many seeds are there inside? How much string will it take to go around the widest part of the pumpkin?

Playing with numbers is stimulating, exhilarating—and fun! How many problems can I do in a minute, what comes before, what comes after, how many jelly beans do I estimate are in that jar? Children can experience the joys of numerical discovery and creativity only if they understand the basic mathematical concepts and processes.

The premature introduction of calculators poses a real risk. There's no reason for children to develop a dependency on an electronic instrument when they carry their own personalized calculator within themselves.

A calculator is only as accurate as the person using. it. Students must understand number, process, and estimating before they begin to use tools to make their work easier. In teaching and nurturing mathematical understandings, there are no shortcuts.

Nancy J. Pierce

Stephen Houser is a fourth grade teacher at Irwin Avenue Elementary School in Charlotte, N.C. A member of the North Carolina Association of Educators and former Association representative, he's also taught grades 3 through 6 and was an ESEA math lab teacher for two years. In 1984, Houser's colleagues named him Irwin Avenue Teacher of the Year.

NO

Calculators should be welcome additions to the classroom. They can serve as valuable aids to enhance student learning and help with classroom management.

We're living in an automated age—and calculators are an integral part of our world. They're found in homes and on jobs. They're inexpensive. They can help us teach—and help our students learn. Why ban them from schools?

The importance of providing students with immediate feedback on their work is well known. Equally well known—at least to classroom teachers—is the difficulty of one adult's responding to 30-odd children working at differing rates, and often on different problems.

Calculators are made to order to solve this common classroom dilemma. Once students have solved—on their own, without using a calculator—a series of computational problems in math, they can use a calculator to check their written answers.

Two calculators are available in my classroom's math area. Students use them to check their problems so they can get immediate feedback on their accuracy. They also use them as a center activity. Students who go to the center can work on various calculator worksheets that are correlated to my math program.

Calculators are particularly helpful to teachers who assign a lot of independent tasks or have their students work in small groups. The least expensive calculator on today's market can solve the various computational problems assigned in elementary classrooms. So students can check their work as they finish—and spend more time on learning and less waiting for the teacher to be free.

There's also much to be said for calculators as a device to stimulate children's interest in math. The lighted digits, colorful cases, keys to push, and immediate answers make these machines fun. Students enjoy using calculators—and their enjoyment helps promote positive attitudes toward math.

Even drill practice on basic skills becomes less of a chore when calculators are at hand. Texas Instruments, for example, sells a colorful calculator that offers addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems at four levels of difficulty. This calculator, called "Little Professor," is popular among students. It keeps an ongoing tally and gives them their score after each series of five problems.

Teachers need to be flexible—to entertain the possibility of using more than the standard teaching equipment of the past. Each new piece of equipment should be evaluated on its merits. The question is whether a potential classroom tool will enrich the learning and well-being of our students. When it comes to calculators, I believe the answer is yes.

Let me be clear: calculators should not take the place of students' learning basic math skills. There's no substitute—or shortcut—for children's acquiring an understanding of mathematical concepts and processes.

Nor are calculators essential tools in teaching elementary math. It's certainly true that my generation—and those that went before—managed quite well without them.

But calculators are one of the tools of our age. They can help us teach—and help our students learn. The key, as with any classroom aid, is teacher guidance and direction.

A final word of caution: To remove temptation, I recommend putting calculators away at test time.

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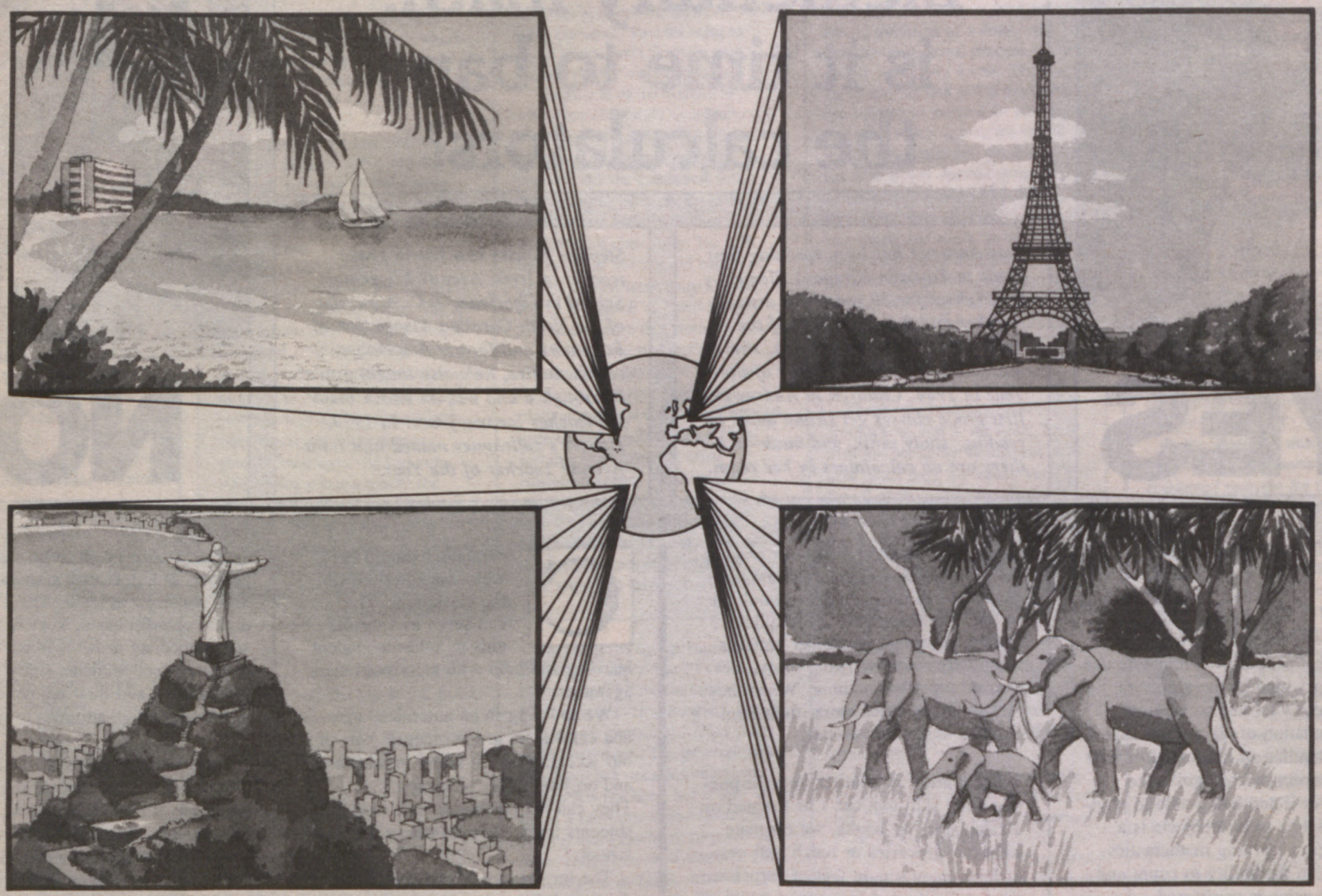

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